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UNKNOWN SUFFOLK

BY DONALD MAXWELL

Being a series of unmethodical Explorations of the County illustrated in line and colour by the Author

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PREFACE

BEFORE I began the compiling of this book Suffolk was like Norfolk an unknown country to me. True, I had caught some glimpse of it from the sea during the war, and fragments of this I have duly reflected in the chapter entitled *Beachcombing*. It was, however, no knowledge of Suffolk itself but of the sort of seaboard which this county has in common with a good deal of Essex and Norfolk.

Arriving, therefore, in Suffolk as a foreign explorer I was quite untrammelled by any prejudices, geographical or racial. I soon found that there are two sides to all matters in Suffolk, that of East Suffolk and that of West. I had to be very careful what I said about the other side. In fact I had nearly written in my embarrassment :

> East Suffolk is East Suffolk,
> And West Suffolk is West Suffolk,
> And never the twain shall meet.

but thought better of it.

The people of Bury St. Edmunds are apt to be a little distant if you confuse them with those industrial-minded people of Ipswich, and, likewise, the people of Ipswich look a trifle scornful if you speak of them in the same way as of those delightful but somewhat soporific survivals who live among their musty ruins at Bury.

I played the part throughout most strictly as a benevolent neutral and was accorded by both sides the most cordial welcome, lavish hospitality and valuable pilotage.

I recall with pleasure every minute that I spent in Suffolk on what to me was a delightful task, and appreciate to the full the forbearance and good humour with which my vagaries of study and of sketching were received.

As usual I am indebted to both the Editors of the *Graphic* and of the *Yachting Monthly* for their kindness and courtesy in placing at my disposal all sketches and matter which have appeared in their respective columns.

DONALD MAXWELL

BORSTAL
ROCHESTER
July 17, 1926

REPRODUCED BY LEVISH PUBLICITY

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I

VANISHED POMPS

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" Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous."

EMERSON

VANISHED POMPS

THE good ship *Penguin,* with every stitch of canvas she could muster and with the full advantage of a following breeze, moved slowly through the water lifting and curtsying to a gentle swell. But the tide was too much for her, and it was soon apparent as I took a bearing upon an island mark that we were losing ground.

We had fared well on this tide from Felixstowe. By Woodbridge Haven the wind had freshened, and by Orfordness we were bowling along. From the cross-trees I could see the strange formation of the sea and land, and there was

A BIT OF FELIXSTOWE FROM THE SEA

the river with white sails upon it and a little town complete with castle and divided from the sea outside by only a small ridge of shingle—a geographical peak that is very striking.

The short and lively sea which we had encountered at this point by the lighthouse—playfully described by the Admiralty as a "ripple"—lost us our dinghy, and we had spent some two hours manœuvring to pick it up: and now, with Southwold, our objective in sight, we should have to drop anchor and wait for the morning tide. The sun went down in glory behind a pile of clouds and behind the earthy cliffs of Dunwich, and Brown, who is always on the look out for historical romance, reminded us that we had anchored in the once busy streets of old Dunwich, with its twenty-three churches, its walls, and its gates and towers.

"Behold," said Brown, as he pointed towards the ram-

THE PENGUIN OFF SOUTHWOLD

part of cloud in the west, now fringed with fire, "cloud towers by ghostly masons wrought—and had we been here in the time of Edward III where we now see these ghostly bastions we should have been looking at a sky-line not unlike it, of formidable walls and embattled towers and the soaring spires of its great churches." Brown had evidently anticipated this, for he produced from his note-book chapter and verse to substantiate his words.

"The towne was of great forse and strong enowghe to keep out a greate number of people," and when Robert the Earl of Leicester came "to the said towne of Dunwich, to have taken it against the King," he beheld the strength of it, and "it was terror and feare unto him to behold it; and so he retyred both he and his people."

Dunwich, however, for all its strong defences was powerless against another enemy—the sea. The silt of shingle and

sand driven in by gales time and again choked up the entrances to the port—for the first time seriously in the reign of Edward III—and subsequently, like Winchelsea, which was alternately battered and choked up, till the days of Elizabeth, who received from the people of Dunwich a petition for aid.

"The towne of Dunwytche is by rage and surgres of the sea, daylie wasted and devoured; and the haven of her highnes said towne by diverse rages of wyndes continually landed and barred, so as no shippes or boates can either enter in or oughte, to the utter decay of the said towne, which heretofore hathe well and fayethfullie served her Majesty, and her noble progenitors, by navigation in tyme of war, and the commonwealth in tyme of peace."

After this good Queen Bess thought she would be really munificent. She therefore surpassed herself in meanness and niggardly practice after a muster of high sounding-words, and lent them the proceeds of sale, some materials from Ingate Church and the chancel of Kessingland. The loan was, of course, ridiculously useless, and history does not record what the good people of Dunwich said when they received the news of their good fortune.

Queen Elizabeth is so often taken to task by historians for these bursts of meanness. It is possible, however, that she was struggling to be recognized as a humorist, and this was often greatly misunderstood.

At dawn we weighed anchor. It speaks well for the general health and good nerves of Eve, Scylla and Charybdis that the

THE PENGUIN NEAR ORFORDNESS

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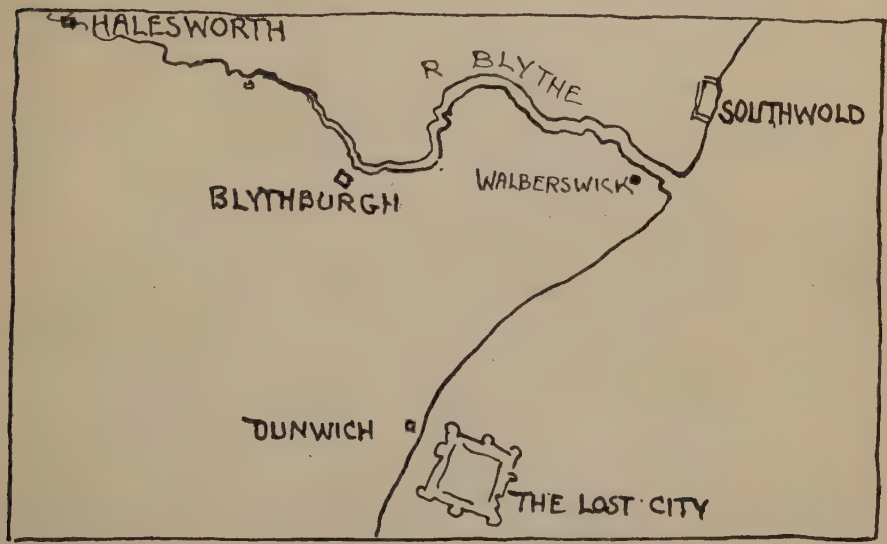
din of the clanking chain did not seem to make any difference to them and they slept peacefully through it.

Brown took the wheel and I sat up on the cross-trees getting such glimpses of unknown Suffolk as I could, the tall tower of Walberswick being the principal feature of the landscape. We made Walberswick and entered the river as the



THE POSITION OF OLD DUNWICH UNDER THE SEA

sun appeared, and we found a snug anchorage a few hundred feet above the Ferry.

The piratical cut of the *Penguin* seemed to suit Walberswick, which is a quaint and much dilapidated place reminiscent of smuggling. The chief industry of the port is sketching. Artists make massed attacks on quaint " bits,"

and the general eagerness of everybody to get on with pictures and studies of particularly decrepit fragments of old Walberswick suggests the idea that they are all working against time to get finished before the buildings fall down. The tower of the church is pointed out to me as a fine example of the perpendicular style. The style of the rest of Walberswick is distinctly out of the perpendicular.

Time was when Walberswick, like Bruges and many an old Flemish town, was a flourishing place dependent for its prosperity on the wool and cloth trade. The vast proportions of the church, now a ruin but for a restored choir and chancel —and that fragment a large parish church—speaks of the great days now gone. Like Dunwich under the sea, the name of Walberswick is nothing now but a name, and the lines of ruins and ribbed arches around its great tower are pathetic reminders of its vanished pomp.

Before we had been in Walberswick a day, Brown began to get restless and determined to discover something. He organized a search party to track down (or rather track up) the river Blythe, a waterway, which he told us is now a mere shadow of its former glory, when Blythburgh became the great rival to Dunwich, and when this ship route was an important link in the great chain of industry between this country and Flanders.

When Dunwich decayed Blythburgh became the great wool port, and with it Walberswick. To this day some idea of the great importance of this town can be realized as the traveller comes into Blythburgh, for there a vast church of

THE WOODED SHORES NEAR SOUTHWOLD

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cathedral-like proportions rises above the humbler roofs of the village.

It is common in East Anglia as in many other parts of rural England to find these enormous churches with no village that is large enough to use them adequately. I have often heard discussions as to the reason of this. The theory put forward generally is that in the time of their foundation there were large towns now decayed away to nothing. Most of the houses being constructed of wood have not stood when once the population of the district began to fall off. The churches, however, being of more solid construction have remained.

Another theory is that they were never intended to serve one place only, but were a compromise to serve various villages in the neighbourhood and were not necessarily built in any one village at all.

It is probable moreover that in many cases the size and beauty of the church is not only an outward sign of the number of people associated with it. Not only pious individuals, but guilds, some of which were enormously wealthy, vied with each other in raising stately churches and the glory of them has nothing to do with the number of the inhabitants living around them.

It was to Blythburgh that Brown marshalled his forces to track down the phantom river. He told us that Halesworth was also a place of some importance, and he felt certain that the river Blythe was of far greater dimensions in the middle ages than now, as so much of the country had not been

cleared of woodlands. It was the subsequent clearing and draining of land that tended to shrink the river. This contention can probably be justified. Before the advent of the railway, so an inhabitant of Blythburgh informed us, there were locks on the river as far as Halesworth, and that town received the greater part of its supplies by barges that linked it with the sea.

Our party consisted of the full complement of the *Penguin*, Brown, Eve, Scylla and Charybdis, and myself. We struck out for Wenhaston, keeping to the ridge that runs along the north side of the river. Progress would probably have been faster were it not for the thirst for "nature study" on the part of Scylla and Charybdis, who were always darting off at a tangent after what they alleged to be rare specimens of the fauna and flora of Suffolk and getting lost.

II

THE PHANTOM WATERWAY

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"For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild but to flout the ruin's grey."

SCOTT

THE PHANTOM WATERWAY

AFTER a mile or so we came to a side road which ran down and crossed the river by a high-backed brick bridge, which I have sketched at the end of this chapter. Here we rested awhile, until a shout from Charybdis announced a great discovery. We hastened to the spot, by the stream a little above the bridge, and there was a mysterious V-shaped obstruction over which the water of the little river was falling with a merry noise.

"A prehistoric lock," suggested Eve.

"Not a bad guess," pronounced Brown, "but scarcely

WALBERSWICK

prehistoric. It *has* been a lock, however, and this is a trace of the sill on which the upper gates rested. Fifty feet below there, by the bridge, stood the other gates."

We all felt that the exploring party was beginning to justify its existence and we pushed on, this time keeping to the left bank of the stream. It was a tortuous way, but we stuck to it through thistles and nettles and mud until we came to Wenhaston Mill. Above this point we made another discovery—well, scarcely a discovery this time, because it is so obvious that nobody passing this place could miss it—that of a ruined lock with gates and chains *in situ*, covered with fantastic growths of weed and small trees. It was not unlike the scene of the ghost gates discovered by Scylla and Charybdis near Cranleigh and recorded in *Unknown Surrey*.

The scent was now hot, and keeping on for some three-

SOUTHWOLD, FROM WALBERSWICK

quarters of a mile, we came to another brick bridge and found again, in relatively the same position as at the last bridge, traces of another lock. In this case, moreover, we found the oldest inhabitant of the village, who told us that he could himself remember barges passing his cottage on their way up to Halesworth. He told us also that the last lock of all was this side of Halesworth and that the waterway did not ever go into the town. This last piece of information seemed to me difficult to credit, because it would seem useless having locks up to Halesworth if nothing ever went there. The stream, too, runs through Halesworth. No doubt our expedition would unravel the knotty point.

Keeping now to the right bank of the stream, through a little plantation of young trees, we came to a very beautiful little stretch of river. I have endeavoured to give some sem-

blance of it on page 29, a scene not unlike one I can remember in the Ardennes. Then to more open country. On the right a ridge, some pines and a windmill (page 27), and then amidst a wilderness of rushes, a strange black object, like a cage. It proves to be a ruined lock.

The oldest inhabitant of the village seemed to have been

BLYTHBURGH CHURCH

a true prophet, and the waterway seems to end here. However, an arch in the railway embankment lets the stream through, and I should imagine that before the railway came there was a way into Halesworth and a quay.

As we entered Halesworth the first large building we came to was a malt-house. This was built in such a position in

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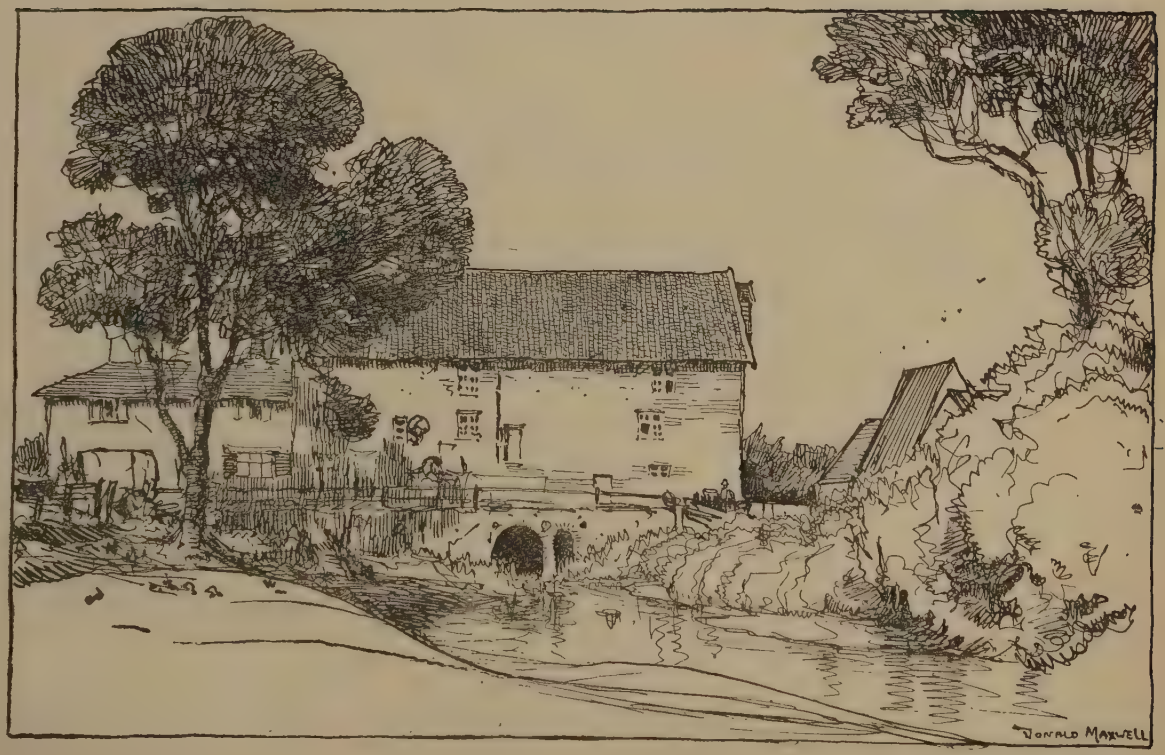


THE MILL AT WENHASTON

regard to the river that Brown unhesitatingly pronounced it as a "port" of Halesworth. "You will find," he said, "that before the advent of the railway this brewery received its supplies and sent away its barrels by water."

"My dear Brown," I expostulated, "you have a way of announcing as proved facts the most flimsy of theories. You are always getting me into hot water with critics, and more than once these same critics have imagined that your theories were mine and I am hard put to it to defend them. Hundreds of people write to me on matters of topography and history arising out of these *unknown* books. Some are almost abusive."

Eve stuck up for Brown, and said that it was just like me to run Brown down when he had in reality supplied me with most of my adventurous chapters. Probably Brown was right about this brewery.

Scylla and Charybdis, encouraged by Eve's independent spirit almost rebuked me for doubting the recognized oracle. In any case, they said, a brewery would be near a good supply of water for making government ale. Altogether I was put in my place by the whole company and I had to adopt a more respectful tone to Brown, and so I gave in to the point about the malt-house harbour and took him to task about something else—something about which I had long wanted an opportunity to speak.

"Brown," I said, as impressively as I could, "unless you pull yourself together it seems that your days are numbered. Already reviewers are beginning to doubt you. One paper

openly referred to Mr. Maxwell and his 'mythical friend' Brown. Now if that sort of thing goes on I shall find myself writing a sort of Sherlock-Holmes-without-Watson-story. You must do something desperate. Break a plate glass

A BRIDGE ON THE BLYTHE

window and get arrested, and so appear in the Press as the celebrated Mr. Brown of *Unknown Kent* fame, the discoverer of the Lost Road of Kent, founder of the Confraternity of the Historical Investigators of the Sussex Iron Age, victor

A GRASS-GROWN LOCK AT WENHASTON

A WINDMILL NEAR HALESWORTH

of one of the decisive battles of the world, the attack on South Walsham Broad. . . ."

My lecture and exhortation was somewhat curtailed by the whole party, except myself, catching sight of a sign-board bearing the legend : "The Wherry Inn."

"There you are," exclaimed Brown. "Your pessimistic arguments are scattered like chaff before the wind."

It was now nearly dark, but in spite of that fact, I could see that the inn, which stood out of the main road, was quite new. It was a building of red brick, most unpicturesque and not at all what one would expect from such a name.

"Not so fast," I said with some superiority. "Here is a brand new building, nowhere near a place of wherries and you think that your case is proved. The name may have been given it by a landlord who wanted an old-world name."

"I will stake my reputation," replied Brown, "that this inn was built twelve years ago on the site of a thatched building of the same name standing by a quayside—and this was the harbour of Halesworth. We will put the matter to the test. In any case we all have a long thirst."

Brown strode into the inn and called for refreshment as we willingly followed him.

"Landlord," he asked, "was it twelve years ago that the old thatched Wherry Inn by the quay was burnt down?"

"No, sir; it were nine year ago. I suppose, sir, as how you remember it when the basin was here? There is no quayside now, but you can see where it was if you come out at the back."

We did so, and there was a grass-grown basin where wherries had come up to the brewery and beyond it was a bridge over a place which had evidently been a lock, fragments of which still existed.

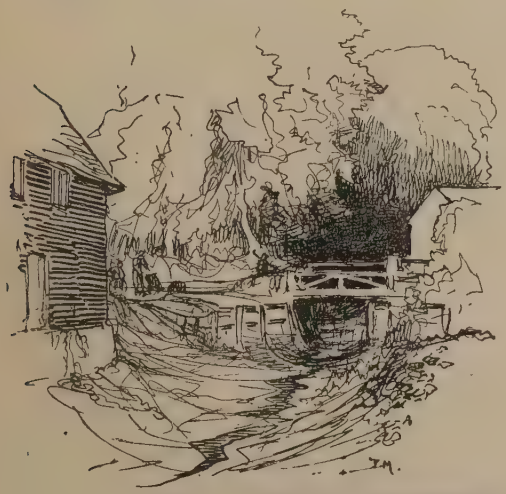
Br own's reputation as a topographical detective went up by leaps and bounds. We all thought it was very wonderful. Afterwards I asked him how he arrived at so accurate a diag nosis in so short a time.

"It is perfectly simple," he said. "I knew that the river must pass very near these buildings. You need not be a detective to deduce that; you can *see* that it does. When we came to the lane turning down by the Wherry Inn, I could see that it ran down hill, just as a slope runs down to the water. The building was quite new. I guessed twelve years, although it was actually nine.

" KEEPING NOW TO THE RIGHT BANK OF THE STREAM, THROUGH A LITTLE PLANTATION OF YOUNG TREES, WE CAME TO A VERY BEAUTIFUL LITTLE STRETCH OF RIVER . . . A SCENE NOT UNLIKE ONE I CAN REMEMBER IN THE ARDENNES "

"Now no newcomer with a new building would call his house the Wherry Inn in such a place. The name was evidently an old one, and in the old days it must have been a place of call for wherrymen to be so named. My guess that a quay lay behind the malt-house was confirmed as soon as I saw the sign Wherry Inn."

GRASS-GROWN QUAY AT HALESWORTH



DERELICT LOCK-BASIN, HALESWORTH

"And how about the thatched roof?" I asked. "Was that guess-work, too?"

"Well, yes," he replied, "but fairly intelligent guess-work. These thatches are made of reeds cut from the river bank. In a country place the chances of a building by the river being

thatched are four to one if it is sufficiently old to have been built before any other transport than the river was general to the banks of a stream."

THE ORIGINAL FERRY INN AT HALESWORTH—NOW REBUILT

"But why *burnt* down and not pulled down?" I inquired.

"Well, that again is guess-work, but as I believed—and I was right here—that the new building was not pre-war, I

A DERELICT LOCK AT HALESWORT

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
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imagined necessity and not admiration for bricklayers' trade unions was the occasion of the restoration."

"Brown," I replied, with some enthusiasm, "it all seems simple enough when you explain your reasoning, and I am beginning to think there is some method in your madness."

A GLIMPSE OF A GARDEN IN BLYTHBURGH

The little sketch on this page was made at Blythburgh, and shows a bit of the garden of the house that belonged to the late Mr. Ernest Crofts. His canvases so often depicted the old Jacobean manor houses at the period of the Civil War that it is natural to find a setting of an old-world English garden. Ernest Crofts set out to paint spirited "narrative" pictures of a certain period and whatever our views are about that kind of picture, we recognize that he did it well.

The kind of art in vogue when these subjects were the rage has now been transferred to the film studio. An artist advisor might be part of the producer's stock-in-trade and thus prevent extraordinary lapses in realism. I have seen Cavaliers and Roundheads galloping down a road lined with telegraph posts, and constant pride is shown if a scene is

filmed at the actual manor house where fighting took place. No one seems to remember that the ivy-mantled and dilapidated building in the picture is out of character. It was only just built at the time of the skirmish, so it should in reality be staringly new, if realism in history is to be attempted.

WALBERSWICK TOWER

III

THE CASTLES OF IPSWICH

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

THOREAU

BOROUGH OF LEWI
Hither Green
BRANCH

THE CASTLES OF IPSWICH

THERE are always to be found people who decry all new things. Inasmuch as these new things imply the destruction of old things, my sympathies are somewhat with them ; but it is a remarkable fact that some of the very latest equipments of modern manufacture by their vastness, their absence of anything done for effect, and from their fitness in regard to their environment often produce magnificent pictorial material. In the land of cement works, of blast furnaces and of " dark satanic mills," there are fantasies

and visions of unbelievable delicacy and beauty. The unsatisfactory stage in these changing landscapes is the stage where the rural nature of the country has begun to be spoilt, and where there is a struggle, as it were, between type. Add chimney to chimney and mill to mill until there is a city of industry, a city of dreadful night, if you will, but of such character and unity that it is all-embracing, and there will be sublimity about it.

All new things, even the most "picturesque," are received with a certain hostility. I expect this has always been so. Probably when the first windmill was erected, a knight of the old school would grumble at the new-fangled eyesore spoiling the view from his castle and making him giddy with its constant gyration.

The idea of engines instead of horses pulling a conveyance was chiefly derided for their hideousness, and steamships were ridiculed as old iron kettles. Yet now we are getting electric trains we think of the old-fashioned train drawn by an engine puffing out white smoke as rather more pictorial and satisfactory, and with the advent of the unspectacular effect of a ship driven by an oil-engine, we look back with some pensiveness to the days when red-funnelled tramps poured out black smoke, and steamships *were* steamships with no nonsense about them.

With some such thoughts as these passing through my mind, I found myself one day at Ipswich, and, leaving the station, crossed the bridge over the Orwell. It was at the hour of twilight, and a blue diaphanous film seemed to enwrap

the visible world. A small craft with her tackle down was floating on the young flood tide, and distant lights reflected fantastically in the still waters. Had I no knowledge whatever of the locality, supposing, indeed, that I had been brought to this place in an airship blindfold and put down here with no "context" to help me, I should imagine that I was in some part of the world where great castles of a lost feudal age still stood proudly in defiance of modernity.

On pursuing my way towards the region of these mysterious castles, the impression that I had received was confirmed and deepened. It was now dark, and it was difficult to make out details, but castle after castle and turret after turret revealed itself, until I found myself gazing up at a scene that might have fallen straight from the Arabian Nights. There were some barges close at hand, and beyond them rose a magic castle, many towered. I sketched it as it was (page 41), and was not curious enough to find out whether it was the castle of the ogre in the story or a cluster of grain elevators. Daylight would no doubt settle the question, but it seemed much more fun to go away still wondering quite what it was that made such magic castles out of the night.

As a matter of fact I *did* return again with my sketch-book, and for the credit of Ipswich I must record that there was no disillusionment. The colour sketch of these castles made across the basin in an afternoon light shows still, I think, a certain element of magic and mystery which is intriguing. And this sketch, too, seems to prove my original thesis about the "beauty of fitness"—for although the effect

suggests the majesty of architecture centuries old, there is nothing in this picture that is not brand new. Of course distance lends some enchantment to the view, and I am

A VENETIAN SKETCH IN THE BASIN AT IPSWICH

reminded of a *bon mot* attributed to Constable to the effect that nothing can be entirely ugly seen through half a mile of sunlit air.

"ALADDIN" IN IPSWICH: A FAIRY-TALE CASTLE

It is impossible to be long in Ipswich without thinking of Dickens and the Great White Horse "rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rapacious animal with flowing mane and tail, distinctly resembling an insane cart-

PIN MILL, NEAR IPSWICH

horse, which is elevated above the principal door. The Great White Horse is famous in the neighbourhood, in the same degree as a prize ox, or county-paper-chronicled turnip, or unwieldy pig, for its enormous size. Never were such

labyrinths of uncarpeted passages, such clusters of mouldy, ill-lighted rooms, such large numbers of small dens for eating or sleeping in, beneath one roof as are collected together between the four walls of the Great White Horse at Ipswich."

This reminder of Dickens brings me to other " landscapes " by the same hand, and in a ramble through Suffolk the artist can have no better stimulus to his imagination than some word-painting from David Copperfield—especially as the finest bits are drawn from Suffolk. I cannot answer for their effect upon other landscape painters, but as far as I am concerned they make me " see things."

Ruskin, in writing about Turner as a sea painter, makes the statement that he considers one of the finest sea pieces ever conceived is Dickens' description of the great storm at Yarmouth, and it is the journey working up to this that takes us through Suffolk.

We are on the road from London to Ipswich.

" A very remarkable sky," says Copperfield. " I don't remember to have seen one like it."

" Nor I," the coachman replies. " That's wind, sir. There'll be mischief done at sea, I expect, before long."

It was murky confusion—here and there blotted with a colour like the colour of the smoke from damp fuel—of flying clouds tossed up into most remarkable heaps, suggesting greater heights in the clouds than there were depths below them to the bottom of the deepest hollows in the earth, through which the wild moon seemed to plunge headlong, as if, in a dread disturbance of the laws of nature, she had lost her way and were frightened. There

MORE CASTLES, IPSWICH

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Lather Green
BRANCH
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had been wind all day: and it was rising then, with an extraordinary great sound. In another hour it had much increased, and the sky was more overcast, and it blew hard.

Later on:

Sweeping gusts of rain came up before this storm like showers

THATCHING THE ROOF OF THE CHURCH, PAKEFIELD, NEAR LOWESTOFT

of steel. We came to Ipswich—very late, having had to fight every inch of ground since we were ten miles out of London; and found a cluster of people in the market-place who had risen from their beds in the night, fearful of falling chimneys.

Then, after daybreak, the coach struggles on towards the coast.

Long before we saw the sea, its spray was on our lips, and showered salt rain upon us. The water was out, over miles and miles of flat country adjacent to Yarmouth; and every sheet and puddle lashed its banks, and had its stress of little breakers setting heavily towards us. When we came within sight of the sea, the waves on the horizon, caught at intervals above the rolling abyss, were little glimpses of another shore with towers and buildings.

I put up at an old inn, and went down to look at the sea, staggering along the street, which was strewn with sand and seaweed and with flying blotches of sea-foam; afraid of falling slates and tiles; and holding by people I met at angry corners.

On page 50 I have endeavoured to render the effect of a terrific storm on the shores of Suffolk. It is a sketch made at Southwold during the great gale when the Norwegian barque Idun was wrecked and driven ashore. The scene is a similar one to the wreck at Yarmouth which Dickens describes, but I feel that rendering of the sea is tame and feeble compared to Dickens' word-picture.

"The tremendous sea itself, where I could find sufficient pause to look at it, in the agitation of the blinding wind, the flying stones, and sand and the awful noise, confounded me. As the high watery walls came rolling in, and, at their highest tumbled into such surf, they looked as if the least would engulf the town. As the receding wave swept back with a hoarse roar, it seemed to scoop out caves on the beach, as if

THE DREAD LEE SHORE

WRECK OF THE BARQUE
IDUN OFF SOUTHWOLD

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
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its purpose were to undermine the earth. When some white-headed billows thundered on, and dashed themselves to pieces before they reached the land, every fragment of the late whole seemed possessed by the full might of its wrath, rushing to be gathered to the composition of another monster."

It is night, and Copperfield dresses and comes down to join a group of people huddled together in the great kitchen. Here is a vivid touch, worthy of Turner :

I remained there, I dare say, two hours. Once I opened the yard gate, and looked into the empty street. The sand, the sea-weed, and the flakes of foam were driving by.

And later, when the ship is seen close upon the beach beaten and battered like a broken toy, what awful pictures of the utter relentlessness of the sea does the writer portray for us !

There was a bell on board ; and as the ship rolled and dashed like a desperate creature driven mad, now showing us the whole sweep of her deck, as she turned on her beam-ends towards the shore, now nothing but her keel, as she sprang wildly over and turned towards the sea, the bell rang ; and its sound, the knell of those unhappy men, was borne towards us on the wind.

While in this part of the world I obtained a sketch of the thatching of the roof of Pakefield Church. Some of the thatched roofs of Suffolk are notable works of art, the pattern of the edges being both simple and well designed. In another part of the book (page 143) I have shown the thatched roof of a church on the Waveney, Barsham, which is typical.

Thatching is unfortunately getting less general, as the cost of labour has gone up considerably of late. The material used in East Anglia is not often straw, as in other parts of England, but reeds from the river and marsh.

ANOTHER CASTLE NEAR IPSWICH

THE CASTLES OF IPSWICH

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Lewisham Green
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IV

ON THE BANKS OF THE GIPPING

" It is a profound error to presume that everything has been discovered."

LEMIERRE

BOROUGH OF TUNSTALL PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Bitter Creek
BRANCH

BY CHANTRY LOCK

ON THE BANKS OF THE GIPPING

I WISH I knew what I P means. Then I should know what Ipswich means and why the river Gipping is so called. Perhaps some reader with an etymological bent will write and tell me. I know what *wich* means (or I think I do) and I know what *ing* means, but I am stuck with the *Ip*

The name Wich or Wick indicates a bay. This seems plain sailing with Woolwich, Hampton Wick, etc., but breaks down at Nantwich and Droitwich. The reason, however, is

not far to seek. Although Nantwich and Droitwich are neither of them connected with bays, they are connected with salt. A shallow bay of the sea was often enclosed and made with a salt-evaporating area. Thus wich began to be descriptive of salt-works and the Wick-houses or salt-works still leave their traces on the map. Thus Nantwich and Droitwich, both of them brine-producing places, were associated with *bays* for evaporation.

I remember discussing this question with a famous exponent of place-names [I wish I had asked him about Ip], and as he laid down that wich indicated either a waterside place or a salt-producing place a little girl of ten piped up and asked, " What about Dulwich ? " to his great discomfort.

However, I managed to smooth things over by telling him that Dulwich although now far from salt water or bays, was probably once very near tidal water and the Surrey Canal, which reaches the neighbouring place of Peckham Rye, is a canalized creek and proclaims salt water to have been there once.

Before joining Brown at Beccles, where we had (or rather *he* had) projected a voyage of discovery, of which more anon, I determined to see what sketches I could find along the banks of the Gipping. Accordingly I set out from Ipswich and took the tow-path in the direction of Bramford.

At first, to be quite candid, I was not impressed by the beauty of the scenery. Rivers in the neighbourhood of towns and factories, unless the towns are big and the factories numerous are apt to make nondescript views that are neither

A MALT HOUSE ON THE GIPPING

BOROUGH OF LEWIS
PUBLIC LIBRARY
Walker Creek
BRANCH

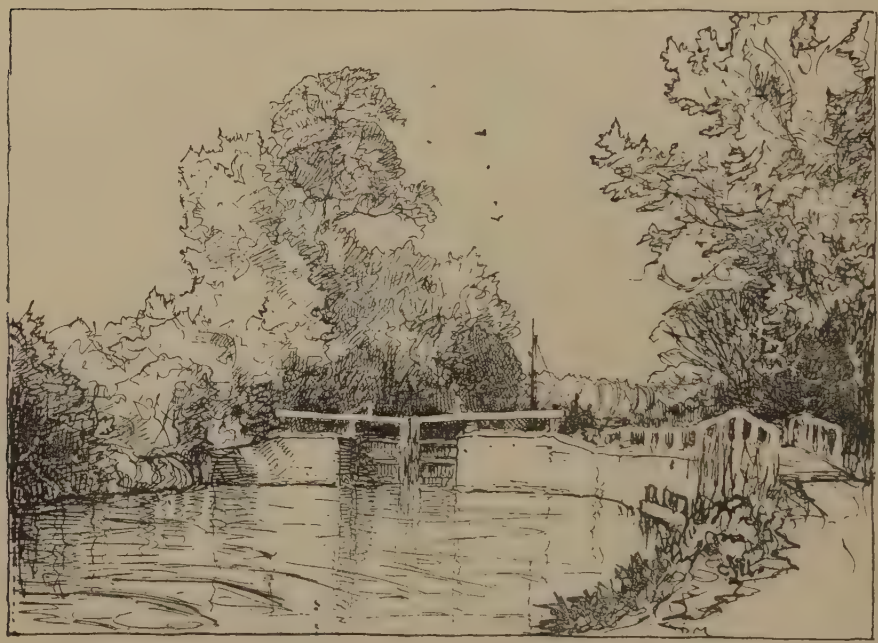
town nor country. The country element is marred and the town element is not strong enough to be inspiring. Twilight

THE GIPPING, NEAR IPSWICH

is the best time for this, or night, but the full light of day is too much for it.

For a time the tow-path is very uneventful, passing

"rubbishy" land that is very well stocked with notices that anyone going thereon will be visited with awful penalties and the utmost rigour of the law. I have noticed frequently and in so many cases and in so many places that there must



SPROUGHTON LOCK

be some psychological explanation of the phenomenon, that the desire to keep off trespassers increases in exact ratio as the desire to trespass decreases. Who would want to go on such wretched land, cultivating nothing apparently but rank weeds and old tins, is not apparent.

After a few hundred yards, however, and after passing under a railway bridge, I came towards a large factory, very much more sunny and cheerful-looking and it proved to be a sugar-beet works. Then a bend in the river and a delightful

SPROUGHTON

prospect of willows and Scotch firs, and then a distant glimpse of Chantry Lock, both of which I have sketched here.

The scenes now are delightful and Sproughton is in sight, with its mill and lock and its old street which leads the traveller to an inn known as *The Wild Man.*

A heavy rain set in and my sojourn at *The Wild Man* was a long one. I amused myself by sketching the fire-place in the bar, and the sketch is reproduced on the opposite page. The sketch shows a rare and curious feature. It is a wrought-iron for hanging a pot or joint to cook. A rod extends to the various iron knobs that can be seen on the right of the device, and it can be moved from knob to knob to get varying heights from the fire.

There was great reluctance on the part of the villagers to be "in the picture." Each one of the habitués of the bar thought it would be a splendid joke to see Hodge or Bill in the papers, but did not feel cut out for a model himself.

At last it was agreed on all sides that the elderly inhabitant that you see represented in the sketch was one whose style of beauty would be fitting. After an enormous amount of persuasion he was induced to sit. The news spread through Sproughton.

"There's a hartist bloke from Lunnon a drorin' of Mr. Finch."

"Old Finch, *he's* havin' his picture took."

"Mr. Finch is going to be shown in the pictures!"

Thus did the intelligence pass from mouth to mouth.

One young man, who was quite one of the lads of the village, and was looked upon as rather an authority on things in general because of an earlier residence in London, expressed the opinion that Mr. Finch would be hung—hung on the line.

The model did not seem to like this, but I explained that

the statement was intended as a great compliment—both to the sitter and to the artist.

Although I learnt a few things about Sproughton from

FIRE-PLACE IN *THE WILD MAN*, SPROUGHTON

the company present, I was unable even from the landlord himself, to find out any story or legend connected with *The Wild Man*. There *was* some story but every one had forgotten it. Perhaps the Wild man was a hermit and Chantry Lock enshrines a name survival of his religious activities.

At Bramford I thought I had discovered another castle of Ipswich when I came upon the ruined water-mill, for the spaces of ruined wall between the window openings appear like gigantic battlements. I notice that the name of the parish is Bramford cum Burstall and that the hill at Burstall is a chalk one. The derivation of the name Borstal is obscure, but I have noticed that it is connected with :

1. Chalk.
2. A hill.
3. A road or track.

And *a rough road up a chalk hill* generally fits the case. Outside Steyning in Suffolk is Bostel. Bostall Wood near Woolwich is on chalk. Borstal (Rochester) is on chalk, but I am not sure of the hill outside Whitstable, Borstal Hill.

The river passes by Claydon, Needham Market and so to Stowmarket.

Stowmarket is a typical Suffolk market-town, depending for its commercial existence as much on the countryside around it as upon its own manufactures.

It is a compact little town, set pleasantly among well-watered meadows, but unlike many little places of similar name which consist of but a main street and little else, Stowmarket has many streets, most of which radiate from the market place like the spokes of a wheel.

In Stowmarket, as in many old-world places, I am filled with uncharitable thoughts as I look at some of the shops. Speaking as an artist I am sorry that the tradespeople have

BRAMFORD

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Hither Green
BRANCH
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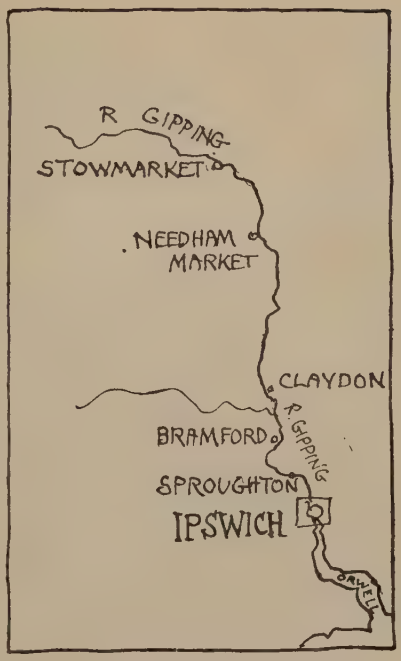
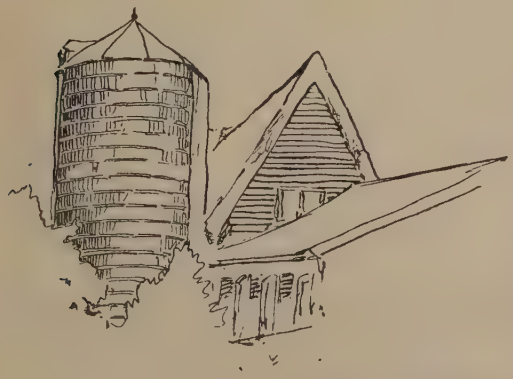
been so prosperous, prosperous enough to despise the quaint premises of their fathers before them, and incited by commercial enterprise to launch out with hideous "improvements" which take away all vestige of local character from their shop fronts. If only it could be impressed upon the imagination of tradespeople in provincial towns that the destruction of the local character of a town means in the end loss of trade, these things would not happen. The market-place is dominated by the tower of the





A WOODEN TOWER AT BRAMFORD

Parish Church. The church itself is seen from here half hidden by houses, but in picturesque contrast, as I have endeavoured to show in my sketch on page 67. Sometimes when twilight is falling and Evensong has just commenced, the scene

is a beautiful one, the lighted windows shining out up the little court. The effect, especially when the strains of the organ can be heard, is somewhat stage-like.

This church is notable as having had for its vicar for twenty-five years Dr. Young, the noted seventeenth-century

FLOOD AND BROKEN LOCK AT CLAYDON

divine, known as a writer on theological subjects, but perhaps best remembered as having been the tutor of John Milton.

Dr. Young is buried in the church, at the west end of which can be seen an oil painting of him with an account of his life and works. Young first became vicar of Stowmarket in

AN OLD CORNER OF STOWMARKET

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
PUBLIC

1620 and his old vicarage is still standing. Here Milton, during his younger days, was a frequent visitor and is said to have planted the mulberry tree that still stands in this old-world garden. Milton, in a Latin ode, acknowledges his indebtedness to his former tutor for the moulding of his youthful mind.

It was during the time of Dr. Young that Matthew Hopkins, the notorious "witch-finder" visited Stowmarket; but history does not record how many victims from this town were murdered by this arch-fiend, though apparently a sum of twenty-eight pounds was paid to Hopkins by the town, either as "hush money" or for convictions for so-called witchcraft.

It seems somewhat of a mystery to me that so astute a scholar as Young could be deceived by so transparent a charlatan as Hopkins, for that he received a welcome from the Vicar is on record and it is certain that his ascendancy was true enough.

It is possible that an explanation can be found in Hopkins' cuteness in exploiting to the full that streak of fanaticism which was ever haunting even the most sober of Puritan divines. Hopkins no doubt linked together witchcraft and "popery" and anything that had the slightest suggestion about it of the Scarlet Woman would be hounded down without mercy. It is said that the Puritans put a stop to bull-baiting—not as Macaulay reminds us, because it hurt the bear, but because it tended to Sabbath-breaking—and so witch-baiting may have, in some cases, formed a popular substitute.

The river Gipping, now quite a small stream, yields some of the quaintest "bits" of town scenery in Stowmarket, especially in the neighbourhood of the railway station, where a large and turreted malt-house, makes the traveller think of an old Flemish town.

It is not many years ago that the Gipping was navigable for barges from Ipswich to Stowmarket. Whether it will ever be navigable again above Claydon, where the lock gates are in ruins, remains to be seen. It seems that lock-gates like windmills will soon be regarded as curiosities and survivals of a vanished world.

V

BEACHCOMBING

[In 1916, either by accident or by practical joking on the part of the Admiralty, it chanced that (out of 1,100 R.N.V.R. officers), Frank Mason and Donald Maxwell, the naval artist-correspondents of the *Illustrated London News* and *Graphic* respectively, were commanding officer and sub-lieutenant in H.M. Motor Launch 154, a craft which carried only two commissioned officers and stationed on the East Coast. The following verses (by the author of this book), supposed to be spoken by a deck-hand, have never seen the light except in a service paper.]

THE PRESS GANG UP-TO-DATE

When me and Bill wos on patrol,
  The third year of the war,
We both gets drafted to a boat
  Called M.L. one-five-four.

The things we did 'ud make yer larf,
  But best of all the jokes
Was this, that both our horficers
  Wos bloomin' hartist blokes !

When we wos gazin' on the deep
  To watch the wily Hun rise
They'd both be lookin' t'other way
  A sketchin' of the sunrise.

My word, the smoke and mess they'd paint
  All sort o' realistic :
Wot me an' Bill thort looked like 'ell
  They thort wos most hartistic.

You should 'a' seen us on patrol,
  'Ove to in all the traffic,
A lookin' through the *London News*
  Or studying the *Graphic*.

When naval 'istry's orl wrote out
  —The struggle of the nations—
I guess as Bill an' me'll know
  Who dun the hillustrations !

THE RIVER AT ORFORD

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Hither Green
BRANCH
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WAR-TIME MOTOR LAUNCH OFF LOWESTOFT

BEACHCOMBING

LEAVING the basin at Ipswich one day in a sailing boat—somebody else's this time, not the *Penguin*—we took the Orwell on the ebb and slipped down gaily. My ostensible object was to make a drawing of Orford from the river, but the allurement of a lovely morning and of a strong but off-shore wind had more to do with the expedition than the call of the sketch-book. We hugged the shore within fifty yards at places and thus found smooth water. There are few places more attractive from the water in a sunny morning light than Felixstowe with its old buildings nestling in wooded slopes. A sea-plane from the air station was running about

on the water and came perilously near us once or twice before it rose. Then it winged its way towards the Isle of Grain and was lost to sight.

During the War a great deal of sea-plane work was carried on from this base and I remember one night seeing as strange a sight as I have ever seen when one, like some prehistoric monster, came up out of the water, many legged as I thought at first but in reality pushed by men underneath it and obscured, all but their legs, by the floats. In the moonlight and in the "war darkness" of the surroundings the effect of this thing was weird in the extreme. It was like a glimpse of some scene in the Apocalypse:

"I stood upon the sands of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea . . .

And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

Speaking of apparitions, it would be difficult to beat the sudden appearance of the train ferry coming into the Stour. This strange ship I encountered one day just off Felixstowe, and at first I literally could not make out what it was. It seemed like a pier broken loose but endowed with some uncanny power of motion.

This train ferry which now runs from the Continent to Harwich, is the same as the Richborough Train Ferry of the War. It is used chiefly for perishable material, fruit, flowers, etc., which can be up in London within a few hours of leaving the Continent and thus have only to be handled once, that is in unpacking at the London end.

We have seen the river Alde and the little lost town of Orford as it appears from the sea. Once inside the bank, however, the river seems different and the fact that for miles the sea is only just across the eastern bank is difficult to realize. We had to wait for the tide, but on the young flood we carried on up to the Orford. When we arrived there the wind shifted and then almost failed us, and still reefed for a stiff breeze, but with hardly any wind, we were borne upon the tide and anchored near the castle. The river is a pleasant one to sail upon and higher up, by Aldeburgh, it widens so much that it might be reckoned as one of the Broads of Suffolk.

The castle does not seem to have figured very prominently in English history and beyond the fact that it was built for coast defence I cannot tell you anything about it, beyond the story of the *Wild Man of Orford*, some sort of sea monster which some fishermen caught and which they considered was a species of merman. This was in the thirteenth century. Those were the days to have visited Orford. This strange thing was kept in the castle and was accustomed to go out with the fishermen for expeditions to sea. It had long hair, and so like to the appearance of a man was it that every one persisted in some measure of belief in its humanity, carrying their experiments to the length of persecuting it in all manner of ways in the attempt to make the poor creature speak. These cruelties do not seem to have been resented by the monster, for on one occasion, when it escaped and got out to sea, it came back after a time and behaved itself in a most

magnanimous and friendly way. One day, however, it swam away, never to return and the popular belief was that this merman, who in the spring like other young things lightly turned to thoughts of love, wandered off in search of a mermaid, and the fact that he did not return was considered a sign that the story had a conventional ending and that they lived happily ever afterwards in the depths of some uncharted sea.

At Aldeburgh the river after some winding inland, approaches the sea again and there is only a slight bank of shingle between the roaring ocean and the quiet waters of the Alde. It is whispered that the great industry of Aldeburgh in the " good old days " was wrecking, but rumours are often malicious and the fact that the Aldeburgh men of to-day stand very high in records of life-boat rescues makes us repudiate the vague stories of the past. In the war too the men of Aldeburgh, in drifters, trawlers, mine-sweepers and all sorts of danger-fraught craft gave a wonderful account of themselves. That reminds me of a story. It is severely against myself but that does not matter, and it is a war story —but that does not matter either.

SAD STORY OF A NAVAL OFFICER WHO TRIED TO LEARN SPANISH

Once upon a time, when I was in charge of a small patrol boat employed off the coast of Norfolk and Suffolk, I was often berthed alongside a submarine depot ship at

Great Yarmouth. Now, the commander of this ship could speak Spanish and in a weak moment I agreed to learn the language myself. Many Spanish ships from Bilbao anchored in the Roads and it would be useful in commanding them to put out their lights after coming to anchor to do so in Spanish and thus avoid any misunderstanding.

As a preliminary, the commander taught me the words for "Put out that light." After a few hours' practice, I could say it perfectly, although I confess I cannot remember one word now. I remember now with some pride, however, that when I said these words the commander had merely to shut his eyes and he could imagine he was in Madrid.

I hastily put out to sea in hope of finding a Bilbao ship before I forgot the sentence. My lookout soon reported a Spanish ship on the port-bow, just coming to anchor.

With great confidence I hailed the captain who stood looking down upon us, all attention. "Put out your lights" I shouted through a megaphone in what I thought was the style of a successful toreador. The effect of my words was magical, but not quite what had been expected. There was some commotion on board the foreign ship and an order was given. Then we found that a gun had been trained upon us.

The ship was a Danish one and they thought we were a German submarine. I have not progressed much in my study of Spanish since that night. It is enough to know that many of my naval friends still labour under the impression that I am a remarkable linguist.

Writing of these days of war I should like to register a protest against the Admiralty that they have never awarded me an honorarium of two hundred thousand pounds or thereabouts for "dazzling" the first British warship. True I have never put in a claim, and it may be that I am wrong in supposing that submarine H 6 was the first.

It was in September, 1915, at Great Yarmouth, that the commanding officer met me on the quay, and when he heard that my peace-time calling was that of an artist, promptly offered to stand me three pints of beer if I could paint his ship to render it entirely invisible.

I closed immediately with the bargain, and promised when I had done with it that the look-out in the signal station would not be able to tell whether he was in harbour or out of it (this was before I had the beer), and that the invisible cloak of the fairy tale would not be in the same street.

With green, white, and brown paint we rendered her conning tower an inexplicable shape which, at a distance, and in the usual dull weather, green sea, certainly did suggest nothing more or less than a piece of floating wreckage. Perhaps Mr. Norman Wilkinson will protest that my efforts were a day after the fair, but up to the present I claim the first "dazzle" ship. Hitherto the camouflage had been to represent something, a false bow wave, a stern instead of a bow, one ship outlined upon another, and the like.

Subsequently H 6 went aground on a sandbank off Holland and her officers and men interned, but I was not, as

far as I could ascertain, held in any way responsible for this.

The drawing on the sheet facing this page is another reminiscence of the War, collected from one of my sketch-books. For a long time now "war pictures" have been a drug in the market, but I suppose one day a generation will have grown up that is quite interested in the various types of auxiliary craft that roamed up and down our coasts to protect merchant shipping upon its lawful occasions.

This little note which I have called "birds of a feather" was made one day off Lowestoft and it shows a submarine, drifter, and sea-plane manœuvring together. I have vivid recollections of the sequel to these exercises. The sea-plane came down and was slightly damaged. The weather became bad and owing to the rough sea it was impossible to manage the sea-plane. The pilot and observer were rescued, but the sea-plane sank. It was my job to superintend the raising of this sea-plane, the position of which had been roughly located. The sweeping was carried out by means of motor launches (one of which is shown in the heading to this chapter). These, separated by some distance with lengths of wire rope between, swept up and down and round about. The wind was from the north-east. It was bitterly cold, wet and miserable, and I cannot remember any time of more concentrated discomfort.

We swept and we swept and we swept and I think we found every old anchor, every piece of wreckage and every conceivable obstacle in Yarmouth Roads; but we did not succeed in locating the sea-plane. When darkness came we

had to report that we could do nothing more till daylight. At dawn, however, a steamer anchored in the Roads prepared to get under way and behold and lo, when she got up her anchor there was the lost sea-plane as large as life !

We soon got hold of it and by this fluke (the fluke, of course, of the anchor) we received full credit for successful sweeping operations.

VI

THE BROADS OF SUFFOLK

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Higher Grade
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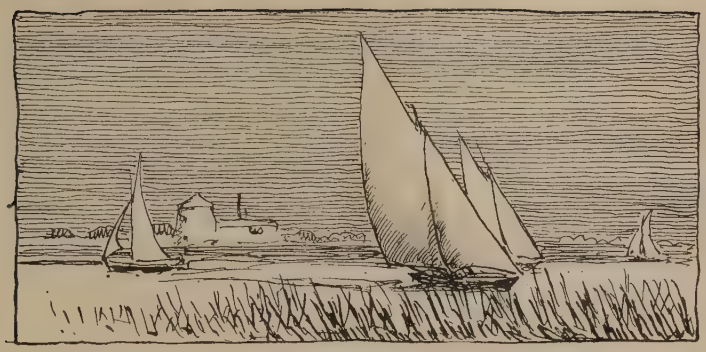
"Fowl and fish are very plentiful here, the pike and eels being very large. The duck, mallard and teal, are in such plenty as is scarce to be conceived. They are taken in prodigious flocks at a time in the decoys. They send these fowl to London twice a week on horseback, from Michaelmas to Lady Day, and one decoy will furnish twenty dozen or more, twice a week for the whole season."

ANON. (*From an old book*, 1790)



Bither Green Branch

THE BROADS OF SUFFOLK

SUFFOLK has been credited by many writers with containing some of the least unexplored scenery in England. I am not in a position to judge of this belief, but can vouch for this, that in the most thoroughly explored part of the county, the waterways between Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth, I have come across the most amazingly unexpected pictorial finds. In one place, as I have shown in the sketch, is the almost unique contrast between a wild sandy ridge of pine-clad and heather-covered hill, stepping, as it were, into the marshland with its windmills and wherries and dykes. It seemed to me, when I first saw it, as if a corner of Surrey had appeared in impish mood to contrast itself with Holland.

Time was, some fifteen hundred years ago, when most of these lowlands were arms of the sea. Between Lowestoft and Yarmouth was one sandy ridge, which is the origin, it is supposed, of these Herringfleet Hills. The good ship *Penguin* had sailed from Oulton Broad, but with hardly a breath of wind and in waters which felt only the slightest symptoms of tide, she had made very slow progress. A stern view as we left yielded a rather intriguing sketch, for at the end of Oulton Broad stands a curious tower, appearing high over the roofs of the village.

It is in such an unusual style of architecture that a stranger might be forgiven if he imagined it was some species of lighthouse. A little study, however, discloses the fact that it is the remains of a windmill. In a land of windmills, where steam is rapidly taking the place of wind as a motive power these relics of other days are frequently to be found. As an example, I have sketched a mysterious building on the banks of Oulton Dyke. Every picture tells a story—and this picture is an epitome of Dykeland history.

It must be remembered that at high tide the surface of the rivers and broads are at above the levels of the water in the dykes. Consequently pumping is necessary to keep the land from being flooded, as no ordinary drainage is possible. Until recent years this work was done by windmills, but, alas, the picturesque and characteristic windmill is on the decline. Steam is rapidly taking its place. Often you will see a shed and chimney, showing that both are in use, one in windy weather and one as an alternative at other times.

MOTOR LAUNCHES OFF GORLESTON, 1916

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Silver Creek
BRANCH
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Here, however, the windmill has been scrapped and cut down, the truncated tower being the only part of the old building remaining, and the pumping is done by steam alone.

OULTON BROAD

The next discovery on my list is the wonderful piece of water known to old-time Suffolk as Fritton Decoy, and now generally called Fritton Lake. It is of an irregular shape, about three miles long and wooded down to the water's edge in a manner we generally associate with the romantic lakes of Scotland. However, you will see on this page (assuming that you believe in me as a true topographer) that the Lady of the Lake might as well have been inspired by this scenery as that north of the Tweed, though it be in so lowland a spot as East Anglia. There seems to be a general belief—whose origin is unknown, at least, to me—that it is a dull and uninteresting country, whereas nothing could be further from the truth.

The Decoy, which gave the old name to this piece of water, is at the eastern end. A decoy, I might mention, is an ancient device for snaring wild fowl, especially duck. It consists of a

series of hoops, like giant croquet arches, set one behind the other across the water for a distance of some eighty or ninety yards. These hoops are covered with netting and are some twenty feet wide at the mouth, narrowing down to about a yard at the narrow end, so that the appearance of the whole device is not unlike a long conical butterfly net of giant proportions half sunk in the water. Tame ducks are placed at the mouth and swimming about attract others. When a great flock has assembled the decoy-man and his dog succeed in driving them up to the narrow end, from which they cannot escape.

The dreadful weather (1924) rather cut short the sailing season on the Broads of East Anglia, though there were a great many die-hard yachtsmen, who, like ourselves underwent incredible hardships in rain and bitter winds. The news of the *Penguin's* quest brought us many a visitor. Some of these, like Job's "comforters," had been trying to put the wind up our ship's company by prophesying that we should not be able to get under Acle Bridge and assuredly not Potter Heigham, and one and all told us that the New Cut, with a head wind, was impossible.

As far as New Cut was concerned, however, they proved false prophets. By every means known to navigation we did arrive at the Yare end of New Cut without availing ourselves of a tow.

Those of my readers who have followed the fortunes of the *Penguin* in Unknown Norfolk will know how we fared later at the bridges.

ON THE HERRINGFLEET HILLS

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Hither Green
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IN FLEET DYKE

Our next objective, and only an hour or so ahead, is Burgh Castle, which I have been told by an archæologist is, perhaps, the finest example of a Roman "castrum" in this country. It has not been excavated like Richborough, and the possibilities are very great. I hear that the owners of the land on which these old walls stand gave out some time ago that they intended to remove the ruins and cultivate all the land. A considerable amount of opposition was encountered. The matter is now, I understand, *sub judice*, and I expect wiser counsels will prevail. The owners will probably realize that the removal of such vast masses of material may be more costly than the selling price of the material, and decide to make the most of the property as a "sight." After all, it is the productiveness of the land that makes a farm valuable, and it stands to reason that if sixpences are produced in large quantities they may be more profitable than turnips. We will wait and see.

It is strange that Burgh Castle, so near a large town like Yarmouth, is almost intact; but Brancaster, which, it

seems likely to suppose, was almost the same in design and material, has entirely disappeared. I have made various comments on this in my *Unknown Norfolk*, but they have not been fruitful of letters from archaeologists throwing light on the problem, and the contrast between these two sites still remains a mystery.

THE LARGEST LAKE IN THE SOUTH
OF ENGLAND, FRITTON DECOY

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Lither Green
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VII

THE LITTLE GREEN PEOPLE OF WOOLPIT

"Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats and some keep back
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots, and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices, and let me rest."

A Midsummer-Night's Dream

Act II, Sc. 2

BOROUGH OF
Ellber Cro
BRAN
PUBLIC

THE LITTLE GREEN PEOPLE OF WOOLPIT

IT chanced one day that I was walking in the country and not far from the town of Stowmarket. The time of year was winter and the time of day was evening, when I came upon a little dip of land that led on to a little valley and a little stream and a little fringe of woodland. The scenery as in all Suffolk was not particularly striking and it was nowhere grand, but there was a subtle quality in it, a quality of compelling charm that led me on from point to point in anticipation of something indefinable.

The path that I had chosen was a field track and no road, and soon I came upon a windmill. The breeze was light, blowing from the west, the sails were sweeping round in that solemn silence that only a windmill can give to human activity. Across the valley, where through the trees I could see the silver ribbon of a stream, rose well-wooded land now showing as a blue background.

Still keeping along the edge of the higher land I came upon a curious hole in the ground (page 109) at the edge of which stood a pollard tree, the sort of place I thought would be a good setting for a scene of little brown men coming up from their busy underworld. I wondered if the county people of Suffolk still believe in Pixies and fairies and witches. I have been told that some of them do and I must say if ever little green people could become realities it would be in such a place as this.

Then a quite startling thing happened. A figure came up apparently out of the ground, but I soon saw that this was an optical illusion and it was someone walking up the path in a position partly hidden from my view. I was quite prepared to meet Old Nick himself and was relieved when it turned out to be a parson, and as I subsequently learned, the vicar of the Parish of Woolpit into which I had wandered.

I knew that Woolpit was in the old Wool district and I was about to hazard a guess as to the meaning of the name, when the parson anticipated me.

" Woolpit," he said, " has nothing to do with wool. The name is much older than the weaving age which made this

THE WINDMILL AT WOOLPIT

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Hither Green
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part of England so wealthy and important. It is really *Wolf Pit*, although I cannot guarantee this hole in the ground as the original pit from which the wolves were wont to come. It is, as a matter of fact, a gravel pit of fairly recent date."

I asked if there were any old-time stories of the ravages of wolves in these parts.

"Well, it is hardly necessary to go far into the past for stories of wolves. There is a tale that a farmer saw a wolf in this parish. I might explain that it was not of this world, but some sort of demon apparition. According to the story he looked out of his window one night and saw what he thought was one of his calves escaping. He went down and followed it and was horrified to notice that *it left no footprints*. Thus he knew it was a supernatural appearance. That was the last heard of the wolves of Woolpit."

It was now twilight. The mill loomed out black against the lingering light in the west, where a broken scud of clouds presaged bad weather. I accepted my new friend's cordial invitation to the vicarage, where he would give me tea and regale me with stories of Woolpit.

I mentioned to him my conjecture, that belief in spirits and fairies may still linger on in the rural mind.

"You have hit on just the right place," said the parson. "Here, at least, our imaginations concerning the little green people of Woolpit can be backed with evidence, some say, sound historical evidence."

I expressed surprise and imagined that he was pulling my leg.

"Do you mean to say," my guide continued, "that you are writing a book on Suffolk and have never heard of the Green Children of Woolpit?"

I confessed to complete ignorance of the story.

"The tale is told by William of Newbury, how once upon a time (I do not think he gives the date, but it is supposed to be about 800 years ago) some reapers in the field at the time of gathering the harvest, were astounded to see two children come up out of the ground. They were both green in colour and dressed in some material with which nobody seemed to be familiar.

"They were given green food to eat by the villagers who took pity on them, but after some time, when they had become used to eating ordinary food, they turned to a normal flesh colour. The boy died, but the girl grew up and married a man from King's Lynn, in which town it is said her descendants still live. These descendants, however, being of ordinary colour and not having reverted to type and gone green, are indistinguishable from other mortals in King's Lynn."

I expressed great interest and asked what evidence there was of the origin of these green children.

"None whatever," said the parson, "but in an age when the appearance of fairies did not seem very difficult to believe all sorts of additions were soon made to the story. When the children had learnt to talk in the language understanded of the people they gave some account, so it is narrated, of their place of origin. They came from a land where there is per-

WOOLPIT

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Hither Green
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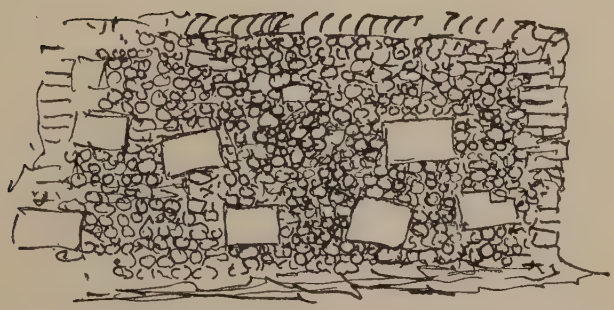
petual twilight and where everything is very different from this work-a-day world."

"Have you any theory," I asked, "of what really *did* happen?"

"No, but I believe the story is too circumstantial to be



"WHEN YOU COME TO A BIT OF WALL WHERE FLINTS ARE MIXED WITH IRREGULARLY PLACED HEWN STONES YOU WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE GETTING WARM"

entirely fictitious. I think there is no doubt that two green children really *did* come up from out of the ground, but how they had got there and how they had become green is beyond me."

My new friend had evidently read something of my exploration, for he proceeded:

"If your friend Brown was here, he would no doubt connect their appearance with the disappearance of the Babes in the Wood. The scene of that story is laid not very far from here, near Thetford in Norfolk. What could be simpler then than the connection of the two stories? No doubt the wicked uncle attempted to poison the children with arsenic and this made them both go a bright green. He then hired robbers to take them into Wailing Wood, and then left them there as dead. But thinking the finding of their bodies would possibly cause him to be connected with the crime, he went one night and carted their supposedly dead bodies to a great distance and then cast them into a pit near the town of Woolpit. When they were found the wicked people of Woolpit would be saddled with the crime and his reputation as a highly respectable philanthropist would remain untarnished."

"A splendid story," I said, with enthusiasm, "and quite worthy of Brown, at his best."

"Well," replied the parson, "I expect it is quite as good an explanation as you will find, so mind you put it in your book."

There are many things to see in the village of Woolpit and in the ancient church, the spire of which, although modern, has a very strong resemblance to many of the old spires in Flanders, with curious "lace" buttresses.

The sketch on page 111 shows the road from Bury St. Edmunds to Woolpit, a characteristic piece of Suffolk roadway, wide in its grass-side and bordered with big trees.

THE PIT OF THE FAIRIES AT WOOLPIT

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Hither Green
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As you approach Bury you will see some very curious things. When you come to a bit of wall where flints are mixed with irregularly placed hewn stones you will know that you are

THE ROAD TO WOOLPIT

getting warm, archæologically. Such building is only found in places where ruins have been, ruins of older buildings which have been used as quarries by succeeding generations, and thus you will begin to look out.

It would be interesting to trace out the successive adventures of stones in different buildings. For instance, some of the stones in the Roman wall of London were worked up into the cloisters of old St. Paul's and then carted off again and used to build Somerset House.

A CORNER OF WOOLPIT

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
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VIII

A STROLL BY THE STOUR

"It is a most delightful country for a painter. I fancy I see Gainsborough in every hedge and hollow tree."

JOHN CONSTABLE
1799

WISSINGTON

A STROLL BY THE STOUR

THERE is a little Norman church at Wissington and here I found myself sketching one day. The scene of the church, hard by an old farm-yard, had something about it reminiscent of Switzerland or the Black Forest and I lingered long there. Another artist, who happened to be sketching in the same place, reminded me of a fact which I knew but had forgotten, that in the church of the next village, Nayland, was an altar-piece by Constable.

There is always something rather intriguing about a

painter leaving his ordinary road and making an excursion into other territory. It is hard to think of Constable except as a landscape painter. Everything around suggested Constable and the more I thought, the more I wondered how such a painter would treat an altar-piece and what subject he would choose. Something of pastoral interest one would think, the gleaners in the fields of Boaz or the shepherds at Bethlehem with rather an English accent in the landscape; but no, it is a figure subject, "Christ blessing the elements."

I determined to make a pilgrimage to Nayland Church, a pleasant thing to do upon a sunny afternoon. In any case it was not very far and the valley of the Stour, with its gleaming river seen from time to time are lasting memories.

There is much to detain the pilgrim when he arrives at Nayland Church. The porch alone is so telling that it takes quite a long time for the approaching traveller to get inside at all. The oil painting which forms the altar-piece is dark and pleasant in colour and takes its place very well, but I cannot feel very moved by it, as some seem to be. There is little about the way this painting is handled to suggest Constable, and he seems to have confined his craft within conventional limits. When he tramped through the countryside he seems to have seen a good deal of Gainsborough. [This is the Gainsborough Country, for the painter was born in Sudbury, hard by, as a statue testifies.] For instance he writes from Ipswich: "It is a most delightful country for a painter. I fancy I see Gainsborough in every hedge and hollow tree." It may be that this domination of Gainsborough

THE PORCH OF NAYLAND CHURCH

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
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BRANCH

was upon him when he was painting this picture for Nayland Church and that is why it is somewhat uncharacteristic of his general work.

Constable was born at East Bergholt not far from here,

A CORNER IN NAYLAND

but while he was yet an infant he was brought to live at Flatford Mill. I have shown several scenes of the river by Flatford in *Unknown Essex* and must not repeat myself, for there is always a danger of one county overlapping another

where a ramble leads us by a river, with opposite banks belonging to different counties.

The influence of Constable upon the art world of his time was first felt in France. "The Hay Wain," which is a picture of the river and the old house behind the mill at Flatford, caused a sensation in the Salon of 1824. William Brockedon on his return to England from visiting Paris, wrote to Constable the painter:

"My dear Constable,—You will find in the enclosed some remarks upon your pictures at Paris. I returned last night and brought this with me. The French have been forcibly struck by them, and they have created a division in this school of the landscape painters of France. You are accused of carelessness by those who buy your effect; and the freshness of your pictures has taught them that though your means may not be essential, your end must be to produce an imitation of Nature, and the next Exhibition in Paris will teem with your imitators, or the school of Nature *versus* the school of Birmingham. I saw one man draw another to your pictures with this expression: 'Look at these landscapes by an Englishman—the ground appears to be covered with dew.'"

A letter of Constable's to Dunthorne makes clear what Constable's attitude had become towards the landscape painters' problem:

"For the last two years I have been running after pictures and seeking the truth at second hand. . . . I shall return to Bergholt where I shall get a pure and unaffected manner

THE COURTYARD OF AN OLD COACHING INN, NAYLAND

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Hither Green
BRANCH
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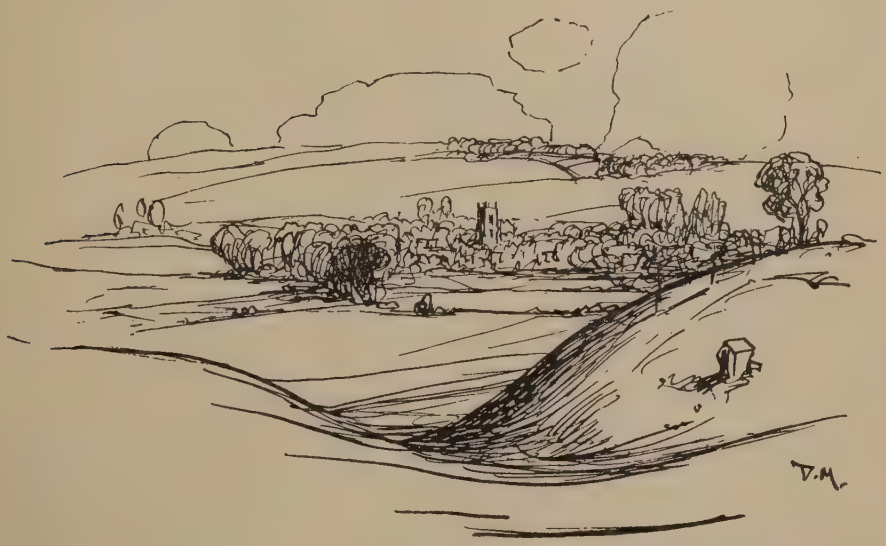
of representing the scenes that may employ me. There is little or nothing in the Exhibitions worth looking up to. There is room for a natural painter."



AN IMPRESSION OF NAYLAND

Later he wrote of this valley (and of East Bergholt): "I love every stile and stump and lane in the village; as long as I am able to hold a brush, I shall never cease to paint them."

Time was when this river Stour was used by barges up

to Sudbury and beyond. It was possible to reach even to Clare at one time, but those days are gone never to return.

IN CLARE

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
Bellingham Green
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IX

WHERE THE GREENGAGE GOT ITS GAGE

" What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet."

Romeo and Juliet, II, 2.

Silver Creek BRANCH

IN THE GARDENS OF HENGRAVE HALL

WHERE THE GREENGAGE GOT ITS GAGE

BURY ST. EDMUND'S is a place of venerable buildings, ancient arches, historic churches, ruins, old coaching inns and cheerful inhabitants suited to the environment but not to be confused in any way with those people over at Ipswich. I found plenty of subject for my sketch-book, but much of it hardly to be considered intriguing as "unknown." I firmly refuse, however, to go on with this book, without giving some sort of record of Cupola House, however well known that is. It is here that Defoe is supposed to have lived for some time and where, in spite of tradition,

it is now firmly established he did not write "Robinson Crusoe." There are also the ruins of an old building from which builder "robbers" have stripped all the hewn stone and left a heap of flints and rubble. What remains looks like a huge cake. When the cake had gone mouldy after a few centuries someone thought it would be a bright idea to make a house or houses out of it. Consequently it appears like some fantasy out of a fairy-tale book. Chimneys stick

OLD DOORWAY IN THE GARDEN OF THE ABBEY HOUSE, BURY ST. EDMUNDS

A WALL IN THE GARDENS OF THE ABBEY HOUSE, BURY ST. EDMUNDS

up from the cake and windows look down from it and there are real doors where you can go in and out. In my little sketch of it on page 131 you can see the sort of thing it is. "There was an old lady who lived in a cake" seems a suitable title, though I think as a matter of cold fact it is the home of some public body.

Bury St. Edmunds is a delightful place on a market day, especially if it be sunny. It was on such a sunny morning that I sketched Cupola House on the page opposite. There were stalls in odd places in the street and as I walked down one by-way I found myself stepping over brightly coloured agricultural machinery. I nearly bought a pale blue harrow from an enterprising man who firmly believed I needed one. In vain I pointed out that I should have some difficulty in carrying it about and that I did not do enough "agricultural landscape" to find it of use as a model in my studio.

How the affair would have ended I do not know, but for the opportune arrival of Brown. He acted as a diversion and I got away—without the harrow. I had arranged to meet Brown at Bury where he told me he was due to stay with some friends, but I had arrived there before him and Brown characteristically had forgotten to mention who his friends were. I could not go from house to house asking people if they were friends of Brown, so I stayed at the Angel and awaited Brown's advent with philosophic calm.

"They told me you had gone out sketching," said Brown, "and I thought I would soon find you. I am staying with the Archdeacon, bang opposite you—Only arrived at half-past ten last night."

I wondered mildly what sort of life Brown would lead the Archdeacon, and whether he had turned up unannounced at 10.30. However, it was no business of mine and the Church is strong enough to look after itself.

"That reminds me," he continued, "I've got a good story about the Archdeacon.

"THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A CAKE"

"I did not as a matter of fact know the name of the hostelry which at present is overpowered with the honour of your distinguished patronage. As I approached the square I thought I would ask a passer-by if I was right for the Archdeacon's house, having only a general idea where it was.

"'Turn to the left,' I was told, 'and you will see it. The Archdeacon is not on the side of the Angel.' I replied with all the dignity that I could summon that I am sure the Archdeacon to whom he referred could not be my friend. It must be some other Archdeacon. My friend, I knew, would be on the side of the Angels. It was not until I came out into the square that I saw the joke.

"The sun is over the yard-arm," he continued; "let's find some shady spot where you can show me your sketches."

Brown looked them through, put on his most grave expression and addressed me after the manner of a schoolmaster lecturing a naughty boy.

"This won't do at all," he said. "The people of Bury St. Edmunds won't like it. Your titles are much too flippant.

I am staying with the Archdeacon and I cannot allow you to continue on your reckless course.

"The House where Defoe *didn't* write 'Robinson Crusoe,' the old lady who lived in a cake, the place where they did *not* bury St. Edmunds—won't do at all. Why, the book will be banned from all the libraries and I shouldn't wonder if the Bishop excommunicated you. You see I am staying with the Archdeacon——"

"Brown," I said severely, "I know you are staying with the Archdeacon. You have told me so several times. This, no doubt, enables you to look down upon me from a giddy height of ecclesiastical superiority. However, I shall continue on my mad career, even if *Unknown Suffolk* is burnt publicly in the square. Now tell me something else."

"Well, you will remember that I warned you," he said, "and yes—I *have* got something else—Where the greengage got its gage!"

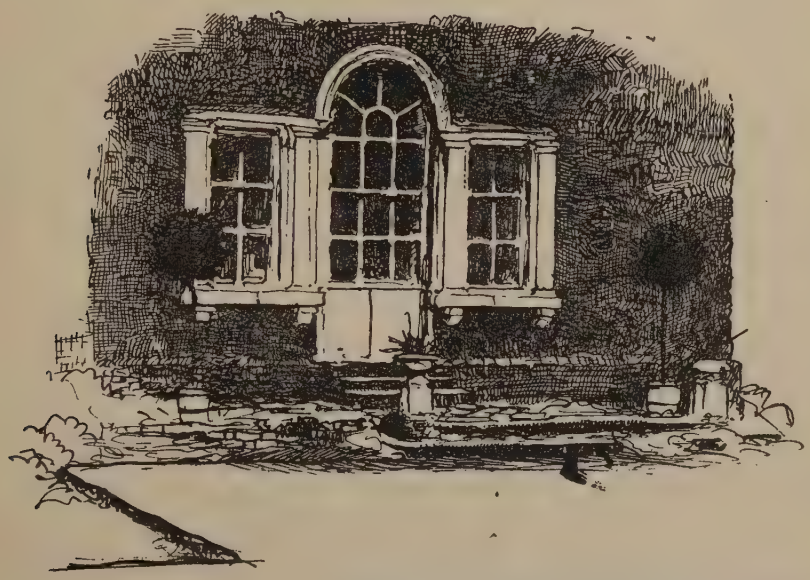
After a somewhat rambling and incoherent advocacy of this as a splendid piece of copy and historical enrichment of my book, I got him down to something definite; it appears that greengages were first grown in Suffolk, having been imported from France, about 200 years ago and that the origin of the name is curious.

A Tudor mansion near Bury St. Edmunds, Hengrave Hall by name, was once owned by a man named Gage, who was interested in horticulture and who imported several kinds of plum trees from France. These arrived duly labelled and under various names were planted out. However, one bundle

YEW HEDGES, HENGRAVE HALL

DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Silver Grove
BRANCH

of these small fruit trees had lost its label and the gardeners were hard put to it to give the tree a name. The trees became known as Gage's trees, and when one particularly fine and luscious plum of a green colour lacked a name it was called a green Gage.



A WINDOW IN THE ABBEY HOUSE, BURY ST. EDMUNDS

After some days I had the good fortune to meet the present owner of Hengrave Hall, Sir George White. It was at a luncheon party at the Archdeacon's. Brown had broken to everybody that he had an artist friend and they were all on the look out for something very *outré* from the Latin Quarter.

When Brown first introduced me to his venerable host, you would have thought Archdeacons had never heard that there were such things as artists and that I, on my part, probably had never heard of Christianity. I could hear him during pauses in the conversation explaining to Lady White that I would be perfectly safe if allowed to roam about unattended at Hengrave Hall.

The upshot of it was, that in spite of Brown's advocacy, cordial relations were established all round and I had some very delightful days with my sketch-book in the old-world gardens of the Hall and in the rambling Tudor mansion. Some of these impressions are set out here so that you will remember for the honour of Suffolk where Greengages come from.

A SILHOUETTE OF HENGRAVE HALL

HENGRAVE HALL

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X

THE ADVENTURE OF THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

" All great discoveries are made by men whose feelings run ahead of their thinkings."

C. H. Parkhurst

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THE ADVENTURE OF THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

BROWN had a theory, a theory which I touched on in my *Unknown Norfolk*, when discussing the mystery of Peddar's Way, that at one time the Waveney was joined to the Little Ouse, and that Norfolk was thus an island. He maintained that if an intrepid explorer were to take a canoe up to the source of the Waveney he would find the source of the Little Ouse within a few yards, could drag his canoe across a field and proceed down river to the Wash. I was

willing to try the experiment, and we arranged to meet at Beccles and talk it over.

Beccles lingers pleasantly in my memory as a place possessing three very definite and delightful views, and it is these that always come into my mind when I think of the place.

In Beccles it is the fine old tower that dominates two of these views, while it is the vantage-point for seeing the third. The first view is the quaint and rather foreign-looking market-place, with the church tower rising at one end; the second is from the river bank, with the church rising from among the red roofs that cluster and climb the hill beneath it, while the third is seen when standing back to the church and looking over the same roofs across the river to the green lands beyond.

Many a writer has given us a word-picture of Beccles and the enthusiasm of one topographist was so "worked up" concerning the foreign appearance of Beccles that he boldly states, "There is literally no place abroad so foreign-looking as Beccles on a moonlight night." After that I think it would be rash for me to attempt any description at all, but I can give you a few word "sketches" that I have collected.

An old writer says: "The town of Beccles standeth upon a commanding eminence and has a superb prospect over the low-lying valley of the little river Waveney, which glistens for many miles over the marshes. The tower of this church is detached from the rest of the building; it is a splendid specimen of the mason's art, yet those ancient builders did leave it unfinished and it is the same at this day as it was in the sixteenth century." A more modern writer describes

THE GREAT TOWER OF BECCLES

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
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this view very effectively when he says: "Over all stands the grey church tower, dominating the whole town, the key expression in stone of the ancient ecclesiastical supremacy; gathered around this are the uneven-roofed red-tiled houses, there comes a mingling of quaint waterside buildings, trees and different sailing craft; a bright green meadow constitutes the foreground."

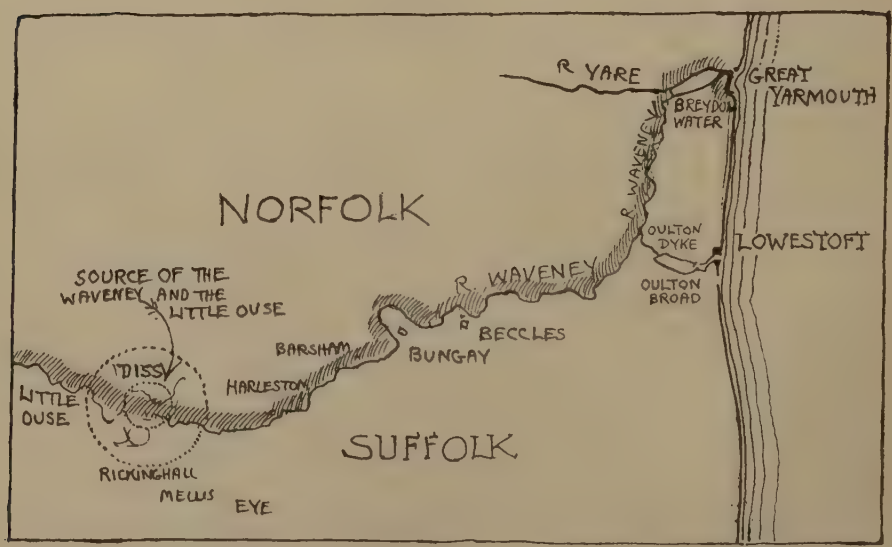
BARSHAM CHURCH

"The changeful outlines of the buildings, the contrasting colours of the roofs with the solemn grey of the church, and the pale blue smoke losing itself in a mystery of half-tints, the grey and green of the outbuildings and riverside trees, the gleaming and sparkling of the water, and the many hues of the various craft, make a subject worthy of the brush of Turner."

"So boldly does the church uprise above the clustering houses, with such a masterful air does it assert its dignity that Beccles seems more like a miniature cathedral city than a little-known provincial town."

Beccles, like Eccles (of which there are many in England) is indebted to the Church not only for her foundation, but also for her name. *Ecclesia* is the family ancestor from which they are all derived.

Space alone in this article prevents me from describing the vicissitudes of fortune of Brown and myself between Beccles and the river Waveney as it approaches Diss. Near this point the river in places is difficult even for a canoe, so we pushed on with a car and a Berthon boat. As a matter of cold fact the car did more than the Berthon boat, which was often an encumbrance.



THE RIVER WAVENEY

GELDESTON LOCK

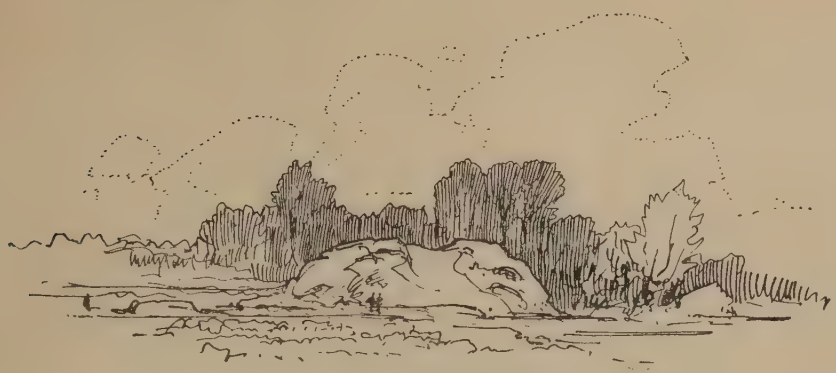
Brown is so fearfully conscientious. I would have abandoned a boat altogether and walked, but was told that to do this would be perpetrating a fraud upon the Editor of the "Yachting Monthly," who had announced in advance our great exploration.

We took the water above Diss; paddled ourselves against a considerable stream till we arrived at a low bridge. Here we summoned the car by means of a foghorn. The chauffeur, who had long ago given up any idea of our sanity, came at our call and waited patiently. The road for a long way now

ran along the stream-side, and nowhere should we be out of calling distance. He was to follow us and keep in touch.

Not far away we made out a curious feature of the landscape—a mountain. We left the boat and made our way towards it across a piece of common. On arriving at the foot of this hill we found that it was in reality an exceedingly small one about 40 feet high, and that it was probably artificial. From the top we could see the course of the river

THE BRIDGE AT IXWORTH



A MOUNTAIN IN SUFFOLK!

and mapped out our way. It looked as if we were to find things rather difficult before we had ascended another half mile of the narrowing stream.

Before we had left the hillock, however, we had come to the conclusion that it was an artificial mound raised for a "buffer" to a rifle range, now defunct. The Waveney about a mile above this point becomes so difficult that even a Berthon boat has not enough sea-room.

"We'd get on quicker in waders," exclaimed Brown, at a particularly inconvenient tangle of overhanging bushes.

"Let's do the rest of Waveney by car," I added with enthusiasm, blowing a loud blast on the foghorn! An answering toot from some distance reassured us that help was in the offing, so we collapsed the boat and made across the fields in the direction of the road. Loading our now

LING FARM, NEAR DISS

unnecessary burden upon the car, we made for the road to South Lopham in Norfolk. At a point between this village and Redgrave we found, triumphantly indicating our north-west-passage theory, that the road was the water-shed between the Waveney and the Little Ouse.

I have drawn the two views from this point on pages 150 and 151 respectively. The first, looking west, shows the Little Ouse; the second, looking east, the Waveney. I cannot find out how long this roadway has been made up in this way, but it cannot have been many centuries ago. Before this embanked road was here there must have been a swamp, out of which both the Little Ouse and the Waveney found their way to the west and east respectively.

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LOOKING WEST: THE SOURCE OF THE LITTLE OUSE

LOOKING EAST: THE SOURCE OF THE WAVENEY

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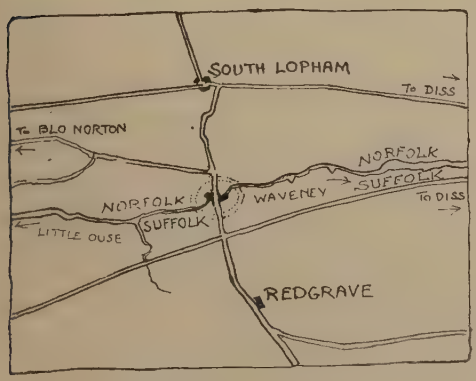
A FARM-HOUSE NEAR REDGRAVE

Here it is necessary to recapitulate a good deal that I have written concerning this lost estuary, and at the risk of boring readers of my *Unknown Norfolk* must recount our speculations as to the nature of Peddar's Way. This is a road along a chalk upland and it stretches from near Castle Acre to a point near Hunstanton. Here this ridge disappears abruptly, for it is a cliff edge. Across the Wash, however, in Lincolnshire, this chalk ridge continues.

The theory that Brown developed was, that at one time the ridge continued without a break and that the inlet known as the Wash was a breaking through of this chalk range. Against this theory, however, was the formidable objection that the various rivers that run into the Wash could have had no outlet.



The conjecture, however, that the outlet of the lowlands of these rivers was by means of the valleys of the Little Ouse and the Waveney, was possible if any evidence was forth-

coming that these two river systems may at one time have been connected.

It seems from our present exploration that the evidence of their junction is strong. They would be joined to-day if it were not for the artificially embanked road.

It is a well-established fact that almost all estuaries and rivers were more extensive before the land was dyked and drained, so it seems a reasonable conclusion that at some time one continuous water way stretched from near Yarmouth, passed Beccles, Bungay and Diss to the fen district of Cambridgeshire.

After making the necessary records to place before the Royal Geographical Society, we explored the country to find some lunch and struck out south to Botesdale, a quaint long street, very characteristic of Suffolk, a semblance of which I have endeavoured to draw.

A tributary of the Little Ouse, a small brook that broadens out into stately waters at Redgrave, soon swells the stream and we launched our small craft once more. Near Blo Norton, which is on the Norfolk side, we came to a strange windmill with only two sails. By this time the sun was low, and the western sky was a chequered pattern of gold and amber. There is a bridge here and a water splash, and there is more wading than rowing.

Another bridge and we find a very pretty reach, that I have endeavoured to depict here, where the river bends round and about a little wood of pines.

The stream now becomes so generally navigable for a

BOTESDALE, A TYPICAL SUFFOLK VILLAGE

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small boat that the element of adventure, as far as seamanship is concerned is now over, and only that of " trespassers will be prosecuted " remains.

We considered we had demonstrated the probability of

THE WATERS OF REDGRAVE

the theory of the north-west passage, the one time continuity of the Little Ouse and the Waveney, and so we literally packed up and drove into Bury St. Edmunds. And so to bed.

Near Bury St. Edmunds is the village of Risby which has a church of great interest, and one of the round towers that are to be seen in East Anglia. I have sketched it and not knowing quite where to weave it into my rambles in Suffolk, I have placed it here. I cannot offer any theory as to the origin or significance of these round towers. They are always early in date. The generally accepted explanation is that a shortage of dressed stones for the corners of a square tower suggest a round construction to the builder who can work with flints and other rough material. Not only do these towers occur in Suffolk, but they can be found in other parts of England. There are three, for instance—and only three—in Sussex, on the Ouse, and one of them is at Piddinghoe. "Why there should be three only of these round towers in Sussex and no more, is somewhat of a puzzle. Some have thought that, as quarried stone which could be cut to form corners was rare among the Downs, they were built of convenient flints; but this would prove too much, for in that case there should be many more of them. The key may be given by the fact that all are at the foot of the Downs on the right bank of the Ouse valley, after it becomes tidal. It is therefore perhaps reasonable to suppose that in ancient times, when the estuary of the river was wider, these were beacon towers, intended to help in navigation." [F. G. Brabant: *Rambles in Sussex.*]

This beacon tower theory does not help us much in East Anglia, for there are round towers where it is hardly probable there would ever have been beacons; and, again, is there

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SUNSET AND A WINDMILL: THE LITTLE OUSE, NEAR BLO' NORTON

THE LITTLE OUSE : A BELT OF PINES

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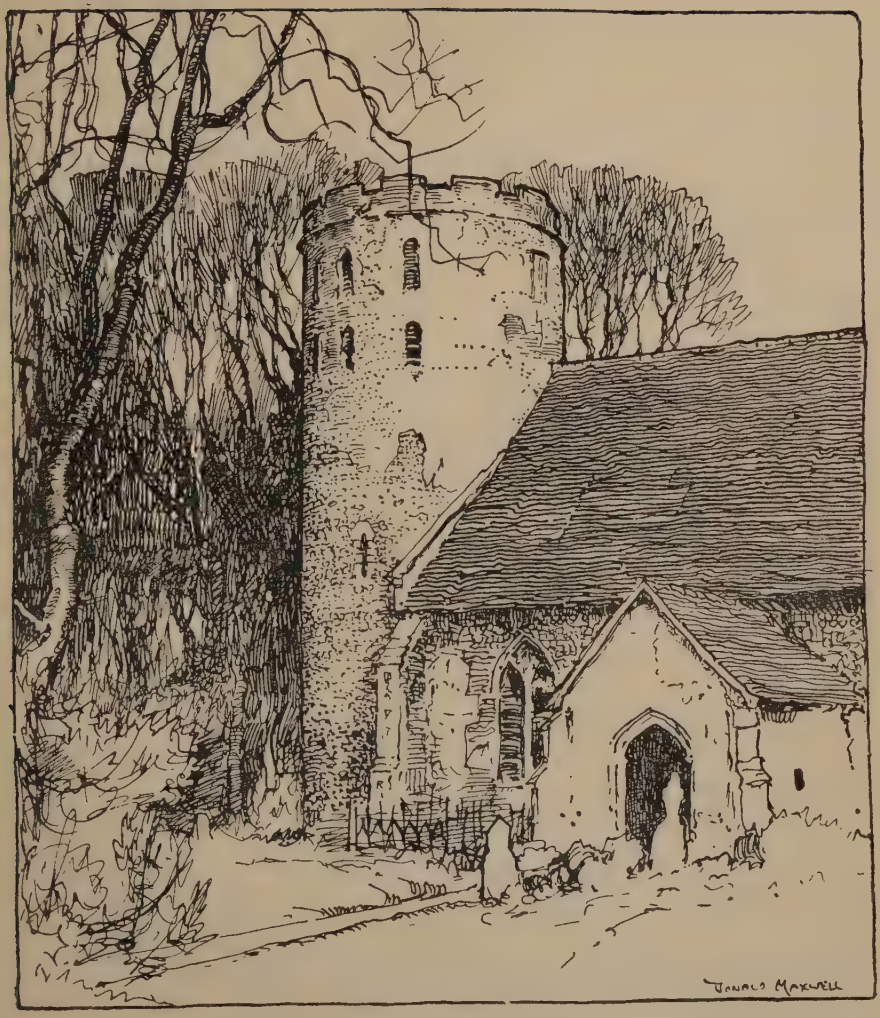
any particular virtue in a beacon tower being round? I receive hundreds of letters concerning points arising out of these sketch-book accounts of my rambles. Perhaps some

ON THE LITTLE OUSE: A SLUICE AND BRIDGE

reader will write to me and disclose the true secret of the round towers of East Anglia. Barsham Church (p. 143), on the Waveney (Norfolk side of the river), is another good

example of one of these towers. Another is to be found at Burnham Thorpe in the Nelson country by Wells-next-the-Sea.

OLD BRIDGE ON THE LITTLE OUSE



RISBY CHURCH

BOOKS OF LEWIS
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XI

THE ADVENTURE OF THE ROMAN CASTLE

"Borow Castelle standeth aboute the quarters of Laistofte yn Southfolk. Great ruines of ye waules of this castelle yet appere."

LELAND

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
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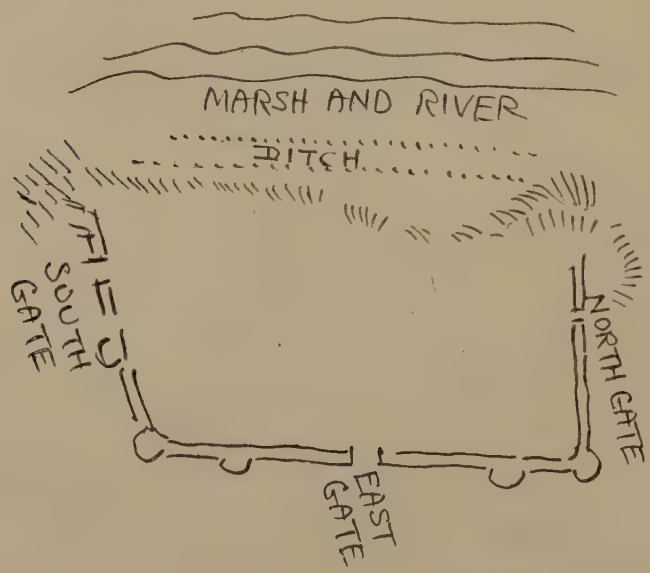
THE ADVENTURE OF THE ROMAN CASTLE

BURGH CASTLE, situated at the point where the River Waveney joins the southern extremity of Breydon Water, is so hidden in trees that it is not recognizable at a distance unless the traveller knows exactly what to look for. Sailing down the Yare in the *Penguin* we had missed it altogether, but subsequently returned to discover it. Discovering things is always delightful, and the discovery of a thing is fraught with a minimum of difficulty when it is perfectly certain that there is something waiting to be discovered. In the case of Burgh Castle we had "got up" the subject. It is one of the ten forts that came under the

jurisdiction of the Roman official known as the Count of the Saxon Shore, an amphibious potentate who seems to have been part admiral and part general. It is only this one fortress that concerns the county of Suffolk, if we omit the lost castle of Walton, now under the sea off Felixstowe, and inaccessible except to divers and mermaids.



ROUGH PLAN OF BURGH CASTLE

At first glance it may seem strange that a fortress constructed to guard the approaches of enemies from the sea should have been built so far from the shore, but it must be remembered that at the time of the Roman occupation the coast-line was entirely different in its configuration from

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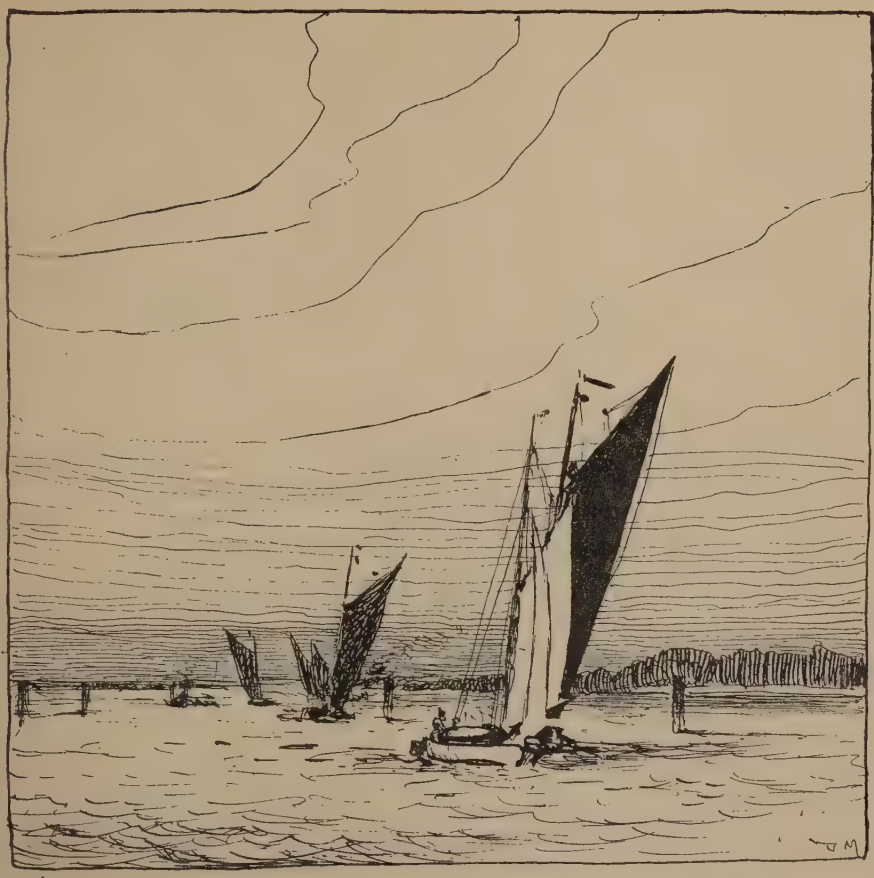
WHERRIES ON BREYDON WATER



FLOOD TIDE, BREYDON WATER

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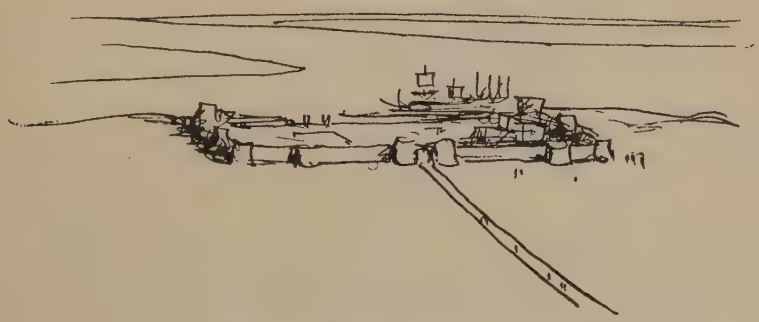
its successor of to-day, and the mouth of the Yare was so divided up with sandy islands and tortuous channels that the slightly rising ground on which Burgh Castle stands was the most suitable place for the erection of so large a place.

Camden in his *Britannia* writes: "I am convinced that the Garionannonium was at Burgh Castle in Suffolk; such is scarce two miles' distant from the other side of the river, so I am apt to think that Yarmouth rose out of its ruins,



GENERAL APPEARANCE OF BURGH CASTLE IN ROMAN TIMES

and that Caistor was one of the Roman Castles placed also at a mouth of the Yare now shut up."

This statement does not throw much light on the problem mentioned elsewhere in this book, i.e. the relative wastage of Brancaster Castle and Burgh Castle. If Yarmouth was built out of the remains of Burgh Castle, how is it that so much of it is intact, while Brancaster has disappeared to the last stone?

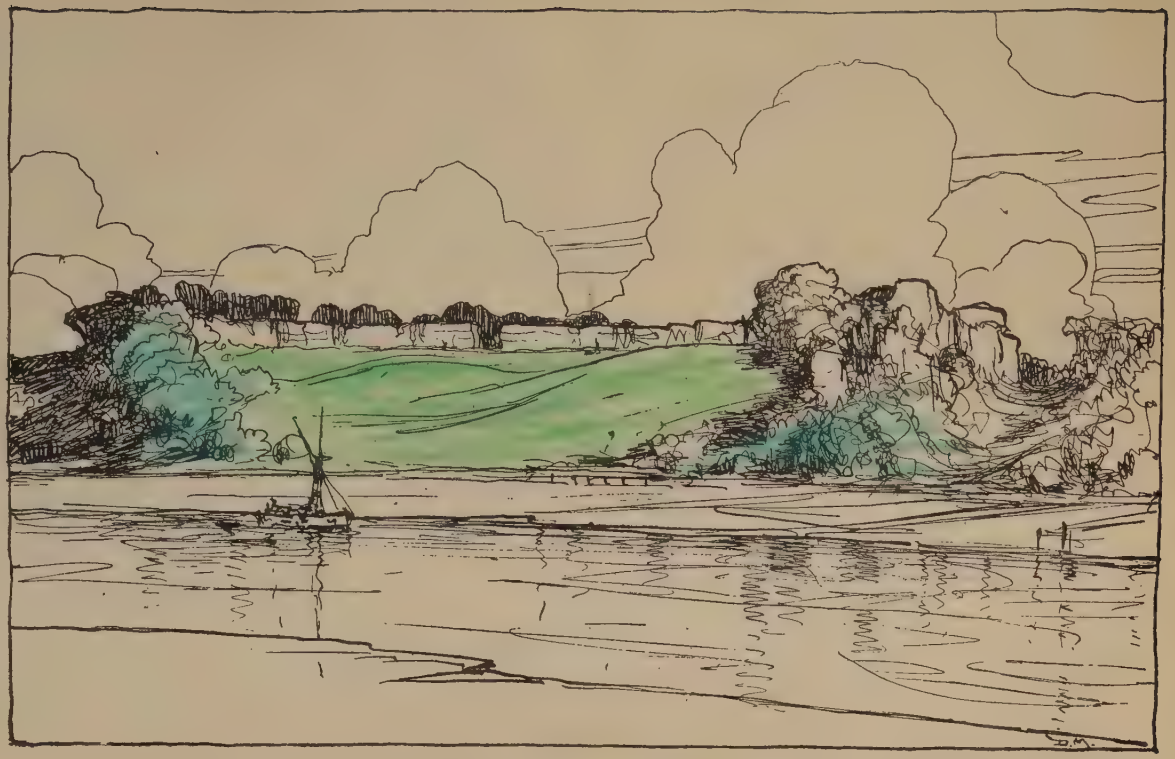
There is a note on an old map of the site of Yarmouth which says: "This being a sande in the mayne sea at that tyme is nowe become the seate of a verye stronge Towne beinge very well walled and ramparted to the top of the walle and that towne is now called by ye name of ye Towne of Greate Yarmouthe."

It will be gathered from this that Burgh Castle was built to command the mouths of the Yare long before any town existed, or anyhow more than a few fishermen's huts on that part of it now known as Southtown.

Leland in his *Itinerary* thus describes the ruin: "Borow Castelle standeth aboute the quarters of Laistofte yn Southfolk. Great ruines of ye waules of this castelle yet appere."

The *Penguin* set sail from Yarmouth and anchored in the Waveney. She slightly overshot the castle in going up the river, and then the wind dropped, and it looked as if we should not be able to get back against the tide. However, a light breeze sprang up from the south-west, and by means of rowing with sweeps and under one square sail, we arrived at the "water gate" of the castle in a style that Brown proclaimed as reminiscent of the days when Roman galleys very similar in appearance would be seen in the offing.

On page 177 I have made a sketch of the general appearance of the castle as it can be seen from across the Waveney. Although Brown was wild with enthusiasm at the success of our adventure, and the finding of so huge a ruin, I do not know that we can claim much in the way of novelty. It is



BURGH CASTLE FROM THE WAVENEY

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certainly true that there are not many drawings or photographs which give any idea of the extent and wonderful preservation of this place, which is the finest example of Roman military architecture in England.

Although the *Penguin* had been brought alongside the marsh by the castle we did not land to explore the ruins till it was nearly dark. We began our inspection of the walls by walking up the path on the southern side, a steep and overgrown way, and one that brought us suddenly upon what appeared to be a cluster of giant fungi—or at least that is what these walls looked like in the dusk.

This remarkable formation has been caused in a very simple way. For centuries the more easily removed portions of the castle were, no doubt, used as a quarry for local buildings. The dressed flints and stones from the lower portion of the walls were pulled off and carted away. Higher up, however, where they were difficult to reach without scaffolding, they were left. Then there is a protruding shelf of untouched work like a cornice or balcony running all along. The corner bastions thus have become very like mushrooms or toad-stools.

The open field which forms the enclosed portion of the fortress is now very uneven and slopes down towards the water which, in the days of its active life as a fortress, was sea, and no doubt skirted a busy quay for ships both of war and commerce.

It would be interesting to conjecture the arrangement of this great camp with its many buildings within the walls.

Burgh Castle differs in two ways from other Roman camps left to us, in the first place because there is so much of it left. It is a much better relic either than Richborough or Caistor by Norwich. It differs from Porchester, which is certainly more imposing, because it has chanced that no use has been made of it since Roman times, and it has no mediæval or other additions, as is the case in Porchester Castle.

There is a very good sketch by Miss Jessie Mothersole in her delightful and instructive book, *The Saxon Shore,* and one from very much the same point of view as mine facing page 176. I hasten to assure the artist that I have not cribbed her sketch, although hers was done and published first. My note was made more to show the relation between the castle walls and the river, and is inferior to her sketch as a description of the walls with its courses of brick alternating with stone and flint.

The wall towards the river has disappeared, and it is generally thought that the tide lapping against it for centuries has undermined its foundations, and that it has sunk into the ground. Nothing but excavation would settle this problem. It is just possible that the water front of this fortress was more in the nature of a quay and never so high as the other three.

The walls extend on three sides (see plan on page 175), and the space enclosed is about six acres and is 640 feet broad. They vary slightly in height, the average being about 15½ feet, 9 feet thick at the top, and about 12 feet at the foot. The main gate is the one to the east (this can be seen

BURGH CASTLE

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
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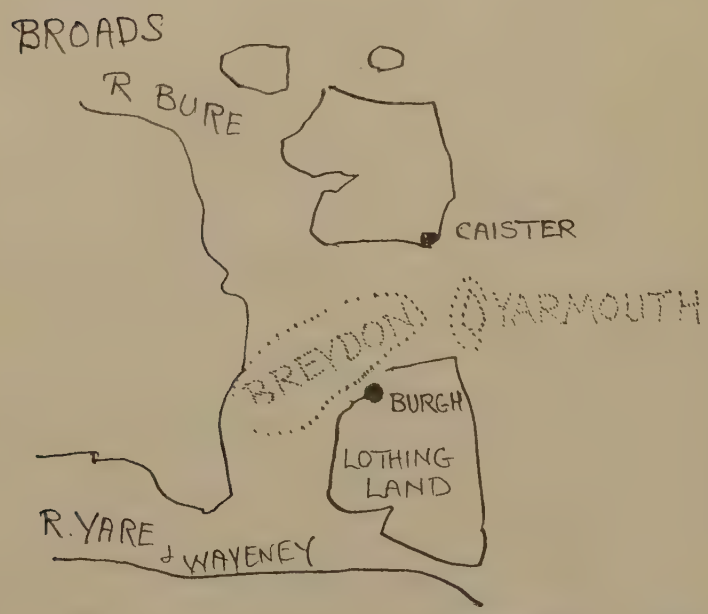
in the sketch on page 175), and is about 12 feet wide. The other two are small posterns about 5 feet in diameter, and are situated in positions that were probably in the centre of the north and south walls respectively.

There are six bastions, one each at the south-west and north-west corners, two in the east wall, one in the north, and one which has fallen in the south. The sketch facing page 175 shows the fallen bastion, and also the very curious effect of wear and tear on the south-west corner bastion. The walls are built of flint and hewn chalk imbedded in mortar and are bonded together in courses of brick at intervals of about 2 feet 6 inches. The surface of this wall was originally faced with cut flints, the cut sides outwards. Referring to its use as a local quarry, note the church tower hard by, built largely of Roman flints.

In the book, *The Saxon Shore*, which I have already quoted, there is an interesting sidelight on the changes of land and sea by the finding of oyster shells in deep layers by Burgh Castle where now is dry land some distance from the water.

John Ives tells us in his *Gariannonum* that in the marshes, and even at the walls of the Roman Fort, there have been found parts of anchors, rings, and other pieces of iron for maritime uses. Also all round the site are found immense quantities of sea-shells, particularly of the oyster, several feet deep. The garrison never could have eaten all these, even if they had sat up all night, although the Rutupiae oysters were so celebrated and were artificially fattened.

I find on referring to various books that excavations have been made at Burgh, and that some seventy-five years ago Mr. Henry Harrod discovered traces of the lost wall—



BEFORE GREAT YARMOUTH WAS

on the sea front side—and the oak piles which had been driven into the soil for a foundation.

Personally, I am still a little sceptical about this wall

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THE WAVENEY: TWILIGHT

THE WAVENEY: SUPPER TIME

being the same as the others. It is obvious that there must have been a roomy quay for the landing of goods and berthing of ships, and this quay must have extended for some distance on the sea side of this wall—assuming it was a wall like the

POSITION OF BURGH CASTLE TO-DAY

others. In this case the wall would be a good deal "inland," and its total disappearance by subsidence unlikely. There is a similar absence of sea-wall at Richborough, Lympne, and Pevensey. This makes me inclined to think that the fourth

wall in each case may have been slight and more in the nature of an open quay. I am not an archæologist, however, and confess that I have very little evidence to go upon. Perhaps one day the matter will be satisfactorily explained.

XII

THE MILLS OF MILDENHALL

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I loved the brimming wave that swam
  Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
  The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
  The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
  Made misty by the floating meal.

TENNYSON : *The Miller's Daughter*

BOROUGH OF LEWIS
Upper Sydenham
BRANCH

THE MILLS OF MILDENHALL

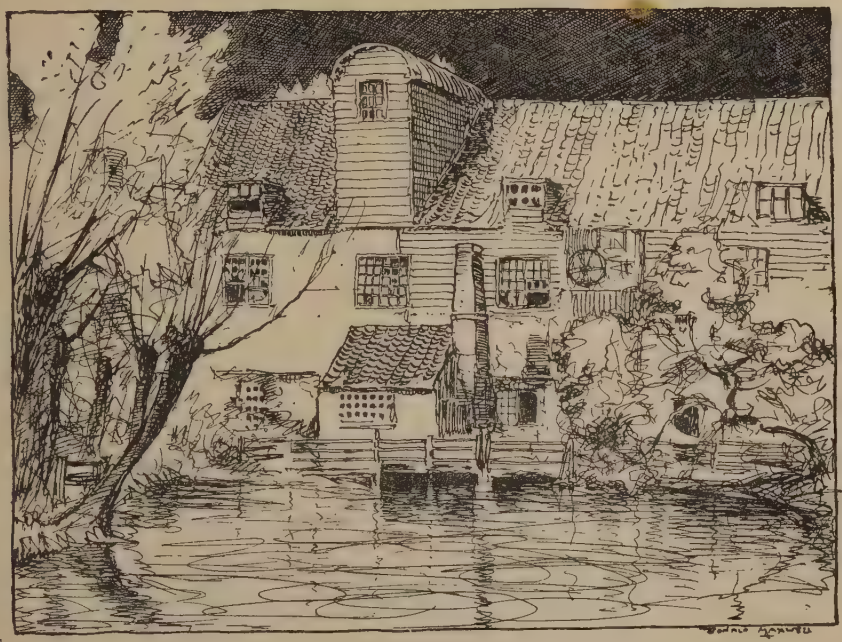
IT often chances that in travelling about by train I get into conversation with people for an hour or so who appear from nowhere and disappear again into space. I do not know who they are and they do not know anything about me. The very fact that we are not likely to meet again makes for interest and sometimes even for confidences. A man has often told me in the train what he would probably be a long time telling his best friend anywhere else.

I take a freakish delight in concealing the fact that I am an artist, having been taken for a doctor, an actor, a tattooer, a clergyman on a holiday, an inspector of slaughterhouses (this arose from a conversation with a butcher), a lawyer, a modernist composer (this arose through my disclosing a

complete ignorance of music), and on one occasion for an American film producer. This last was the only misunderstanding that really hurt, but I suppose I must have been bragging about some of my pictures and so had simply "asked for it."

One man looked through my sketch-book when I was out of the carriage. He thought I did not know—not that I should have minded. I can always tell, however, infallibly, when people have been looking through my sketch-book. Most sketch-books have an elastic band to clamp round them. I never use this, always reserving it strong and taut for holding down the leaves on a windy day and thus doubling back the leaves and making the book into a solid block. Everybody without exception, when he has done having a look at the pictures, carefully clamps the elastic band, and when I find it like this lying innocently and undisturbed on the seat I know. I know, too, by the naïve remark (I might say that my sketch-book notes are very disappointing) that infers I no doubt go in for sketching as a hobby—and a very delightful hobby, too, even if I don't succeed very well in producing a picture.

One of these dining-car friendships began in the Scotch express one summer day. I was on the way to Edinburgh to make a sketch and found myself sitting opposite a man apparently about ten or fifteen years younger than myself. We talked of all sorts of matters, but matters either of science or art seemed to predominate. Aviation was the subject that disclosed our respective followings. He soon recognized



BARTON MILLS

BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
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me as "D.M.," and I soon knew that he was an air pilot.

Before long we were talking about progressive invention in our respective crafts, and I soon found that my companion assumed that invention was as accumulative in art as in mechanics. Although he said that probably through his own ignorance he could neither enjoy nor appreciate the startling productions of the cubists and post-impressionists, he imagined that their achievements must be as much an advance on Rembrandt and Velasquez as an all-metal biplane was on the fire-balloon of a century ago.

I will not weary you with my reply. It would make this book of rambles too long and too controversial. I record the incident, however, of this train meeting because it explains how I finally came to Mildenhall. My new friend, the pilot, gave me a most cordial invitation to come and see him and his family at the Mill House at Mildenhall, whenever I should find myself in that part of the world. It would be common ground on which ancient tradition and modern necessity could meet, for the Mills of Mildenhall were duly catalogued in Domesday Book, and they are still running.

This was before the time when I had started compiling my notes on Suffolk, and so I had not searched out Mildenhall as part of a routine, but on purpose to follow up the genial invitation and renew my conversations with the man who had enunciated the strange proposition that art, like science, could be proved and tabulated and analysed exactly by mathematical formulæ.

Arriving at Mildenhall, I thought I would have a look round before I reported myself at the Mill House. It was rather a shock to me to find that the mills were uninteresting to look at, and apparently quite new. It was only by getting a long way off (see sketch at heading to this chapter) that I could obtain a view of them that was tolerable. On approaching Mildenhall from any direction the eye of the traveller is held by the tall and stately tower of the church. This is a magnificent pile, some semblance of which I have endeavoured to represent in a moonlight sketch facing page 196. In my first impressions of Mildenhall from the painter's point of view I felt grateful to the church and ungrateful to the miller. Man does not live by bread alone, and the artist is no exception.

My conclusions, however, were subject to much revision. I sought out my pilot friend, Smith (this is not his real name, but I will use it for fear of a libel action). He was at home, and received me right royally, and I was soon ensconced in the bosom of the numerous Smith family.

They began by apologizing for the modernity of their mills. Had they known I was coming they would have had them done all over with moss and had ferns planted on the roof. The pilot expressed himself quite conscience-stricken that he had told me of these mills as Domesday Book survivals without explaining that they had been recently rebuilt. However, the whole family would make amends and show outward and visible signs of repentance by taking me forthwith to Barton Mills, where I could have my fill of the

MILDENHALL

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picturesque, and where I could do sketches which by all the rules of war could be included as Mills of Mildenhall. I am bound to say I was not disappointed, and one of the sketches I made there is reproduced on page 193.

I think my friend the pilot must have given some account of our arguments in the train concerning progress and invention in the respective realms of science and art, and my contention that art was personal and not progressive in the same way as science militated rather against me. Although I am in my way as modern and progressive as they are, the whole family would persist in regarding me as a curious product of the Middle Ages, and necessarily antagonistic to modern science.

Nevertheless, I had a most delightful time with the Smiths. I lived and moved and had my being in an atmosphere of exciting speculation and invention. At breakfast we invented new principles of aviation, at lunch found a way of abolishing artists by painting pictures entirely by wireless. Tea-time saw the dawn of a new era in politics, and dinner heralded a glorious reformation in religion by which bishops, priests, and deacons became ridiculously unnecessary, inasmuch as the views of the Archbishop of Canterbury could be apprehended radiographically by anyone who wore shoe-laces.

In the intervals of these intellectual exercises I had only to express a wish to make a sketch and I was taken as if upon a magic carpet to various romantic spots. Ruined castles and moated granges were produced at a moment's

notice, and I had my work cut out to keep up with it all.

Another strenuous diversion was the cutting of rushes on the River Lark. An extraordinary craft which appeared to my mechanically uneducated eye as a combination of the principal features of the first steamship with those of a British chariot used by Boadicea against the Romans. It puffed and snorted and fumed and rattled and by means of scythe blades attached to its clattering paddle-wheels effectively cut the rushes.

The final wonder of Mildenhall, and one to which I was entertained on the night before I left, was the singing tree. What some of the Smith family did not know about electricity and wireless was not worth knowing. An expedition to a chalk hill near had been undertaken for the purpose of making some electrical tests too technical for me to understand. The pilot and I went out at midnight to see why the expedition had not returned, and beheld not only a car, but a tree advancing down the road to meet us. The tree moved along emitting sweet music.

As it approached Mildenhall the sound of a band grew louder and louder. The good people of Mildenhall awoke and put their heads out of their windows to see nothing more martial than a small car and a large bush.

It seems that the Smith inventiveness had used a portable wireless set and by means of various cunning devices had caused the tree to break forth into joy and singing. On nearer view I could see wires depending from the branches. I

have not a scientific mind, so I am aroused with the verbal inconsistency of wireless being inarticulate except by means of wires.

There is much heath-land around Mildenhall, thickly studded in places with groups and belts of pine and rising to

"THE TREE MOVED ALONG EMITTING SWEET MUSIC"

that fringe of the Fen running north, and known as Breckland. And there are delightful regions of Fenland, especially mysterious by moonlight or in stormy weather, unlike almost any other part of England, and generally neglected by travellers because they are flat. There is, however, a peculiar

charm about some flat country, a charm not unlike that of the open sea.

The Fen at one time was looked upon as unprofitable land by farmers, but recent years have shown what can be done in fruit growing and raising of very varied crops. A small area only of the Fen, however, belongs to Suffolk for the traveller soon finds himself in Cambridgeshire. There is one piece of freak frontier carrying a bit of Suffolk out into Cambridgeshire like an island of Suffolk in a sea of Cambridge. It may be that this region was actually an island at one time and when the land around was reclaimed and made into dry land it was done so by the Cambridgeshire landowners and thus added to their territory rather than to Suffolk. The " freak " is worth studying on a large scale map.

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